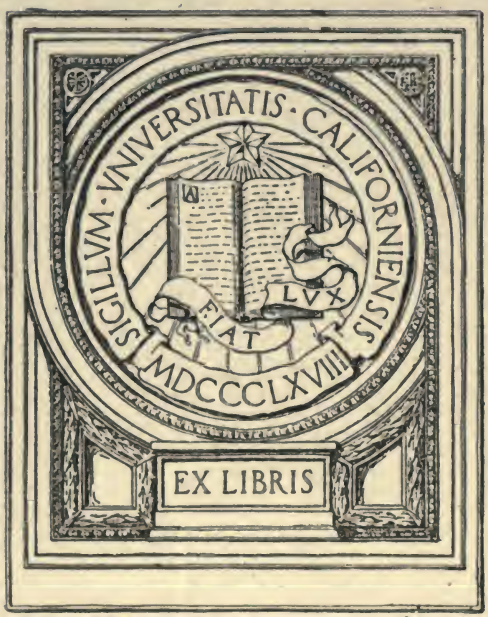
MAVOURNEEN

LOUIS N. PARKER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MAVOURNEEN

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

LOUIS N. PARKER

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1916

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By LOUIS N. PARKER

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

NOTE

If one had to label this play, one might call it a play of anecdotal history. Some of it comes from Pepy's Diary; some from Count Hamilton's Memoirs of Grammont; some from sterner authorities; and the rest is out of my own head.

It was first produced in London, at His Majesty's Theatre, on the evening of Saturday, Oct. 23rd, 1915, with Miss Lily Elsie as Patricia, Mr. Malcolm Cherry as Charles II, Mr. C. V. France as Father O'Rafferty, Mr. Gerald Lawrence as Buckingham, Mr. Reginald Owen as Sidney Montagu, Mr. Edward Sass as Pepys, Miss Athene Seyler as Queen Catherine, Miss Alice Crawford as Lady Castlemaine, and Miss Dorothy Packer as Mrs. Pepys.

In America it was first produced at the Powers Theatre in Chicago on the evening of May 28, 1916, with the following cast: —

KING CHARLES II ..... *Pedro de Cordoba*
BUCKINGHAM ..... *Warburton Gamble*
ARLINGTON ..... *Reginald Carrington*
BRISTOL ..... *Gordon Burby*
ASHLEY ..... *Vernon Denham*
SIR CHARLES BERKELEY ..... *Henry Vincent*
SIDNEY MONTAGU ..... *Alexander Onslow*
SAMUEL PEPYS ..... *John L. Shine*

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FATHER O'RAFFERTY ..... *James O. Barrows*

CHIFFINCH ..... *Allan Mason*

THE HOST OF THE BEAR ..... *Tracy Barrow*

A DRAWER ..... *John M. O'Brien*

USHER ..... *Francis Mack*

HAFIZ ..... *Garrett Carroll*

PUPPET SHOW MAN ..... *Russell Hubley*

QUEEN'S SURGEON ..... *John Alexander*

QUEEN'S SECRETARY ..... *Maxwell Kennedy*

QUEEN'S CHAIRMAN ..... *Harry Dee*

QUEEN CATHERINE ..... *Saxone Morland*

LADY CASTLEMAINE ..... *Belle Daube*

LADY ARLINGTON ..... *Iseth Munro*

MRS. MYDDLETON ..... *Ethel West*

MRS. ROBERTS ..... *Eleanor Scott L'Estelle*

MISS FRANCES BROOKE ..... *Helen Erskine*

MISS HILL BROOKE ..... *Lyllian Charles*

FLOWER GIRL ..... *Vera Mercer*

LAVENDER GIRL ..... *Leslie McCarl*

LADY SHREWSBURY ..... *Linden Champion*

MRS. PEPYS ..... *Margaret Prendergast*

MOYRA ..... *Mattie Keene*

MERCER ..... *Carrington North*

A MAID ..... *Edna Waddell*

PATRICIA O'BRIEN ..... *Peggy O'Neil*

PERSONS

(In the order of their appearance)

Moyra
Father O'Rafferty
Patricia O'Brien
The Host of the "Bear"
A Drawer
George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham
George Digby, Earl of Bristol
Anthony, Baron Ashley
George, Baron Berkeley
Sidney Montagu
Lady Castlemaine
Mrs. Myddleton
Mrs. Roberts
Samuel Pepys
Mrs. Pepys
Mercer
Queen Catherine of Braganza
William Chiffinch
Usher
Henry Bennett, Earl of Arlington
King Charles II.
Miss Hill Brooke

Miss Frances Brooke
Lady Arlington
Hafiz (*Persona muta*)
A Maid

Lords and Ladies, Servants, Mob, Tradespeople, Negro Pages.

The action takes place in Castle O'Brien; at the Bear Inn in Drury Lane; in the Palace of Whitehall; and at Tunbridge Wells.

Period: — *In Good King Charles' Golden Days.*

ACT I

ACT I

SCENE 1:—

MOYRA'S room in Castle O'Brien, the half-ruined seat of LORD BELISLE. *The room is high up in the angle of a tower. There is a deeply embrasured window at the back, beyond which is nothing but blue sky. In the raftered roof is a dormer window, also open to the sky. In an angle on the left is a small door opening on turret stairs, both up and down. There is a large open fireplace on the right, with a peat fire; over it hangs a cauldron in which a stew is steaming. A rough table, a dresser, one straw-bottomed chair, and three stools are all the furniture.*

MOYRA, *an old woman, is crouching over the stew, crooning a song.* FATHER O'RAFFERTY, *a genial old priest in a shabby gown, gently opens the door and puts his head in; then he enters, playing on a fiddle. He stands behind* MOYRA *and accompanies her very softly. She stops in alarm and listens a moment without daring to turn round.*

MOYRA

[*To herself.*] Glory be to God! It's me voice singing without me! Ow! Father O'Rafferty! And me

that frightened I dursn't look. [*She rises, curtseys, and crosses herself.*]

O'RAFFERTY

Your conscience is unaisy, Moyra, woman. Where's Pat? [*He puts his fiddle, bow and hat on the dresser.*]

MOYRA

[*Dusting a stool.*] God save you kindly, your Riverence. Be seated, and take an air of the fire. [*She offers a chair.*] Is it to larn her the dancing you've come?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Sitting.*] Whisht! Do you know the news?

MOYRA

News is it? What news comes to Castle O'Brien, unless you climb them stairs to bring it?

O'RAFFERTY

Ay, and 'twas weary work, for 'tis bad news this time.

MOYRA

'Tis a year and a day since we had good. But what is it now? Is his Lordship to send Pat away from us?

O'RAFFERTY

And that's not the worst of it. [*With an effort.*] She's to be married.

MOYRA

Holy Saints — don't tell me —!

O'RAFFERTY

And *that's* not the worst of it!

MOYRA

Who's the man?

O'RAFFERTY

That's the worst of it. [*Lowering his voice and beckoning to her.*] Whisper here. Sir Timothy O'Reilly.

MOYRA

[*Horrified.*] Tim —! Tim O'Reilly!

O'RAFFERTY

Tim O'Reilly just!

MOYRA

Why, the man's fifty; and thirty of 'em he's never been sober.

O'RAFFERTY

Little his lordship cares. For why? All his aim's to be rid of Pat out of the castle, and him free to begin the old life again.

MOYRA

Meela murder! wid the place full o' rapscallions male and female, by day and by night!

O'RAFFERTY

The ould devil's strong in his lordship and he's weary o' well-doing; so now he's for ridding the house of his good angel.

MOYRA

Does she know?

O'RAFFERTY

Sorrow a word. His Lordship hasn't dared tell her. He writes to me from Dublin, where he's consorting with all that's wicked and — fascinating; and, says he, "Tell her your own way, Padre." As if I had a way.

MOYRA

'Twill be a bad quarter of an hour for you, for Pat's got a taste of the Master's spirit in her.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Miserably.*] Don't I know it? [*After a pause.*] Moyra —

MOYRA

Your Riverence?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Hesitatingly and insinuatingly.*] I was thinking, Moyra, was you to break it to her *your* way —

MOYRA

Me! You'd be for sending the goose to the fox. I'd liefer put me hand in the fire.

O'RAFFERTY

Now, Moyra woman! 'Tis a woman's task; and you've had the handling of her since her mother died.

MOYRA

You're her taycher.

O'RAFFERTY

I've learnt her the graces of life; and I've made a lady of her; but 'tis you've learnt her her paternoster, and 'tis you she comes to for comfort.

MOYRA

And that's why I'll not give her such a down-blow. I'll not tell her. Tim O'Reilly, indeed! Tim O'Reilly's no more fit —

PATRICIA'S VOICE

[*Outside from above the open dormer window.*] What's Tim O'Reilly not fit for?

MOYRA

[*Frightened.*] Meela murder, what's that?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Looking round the room.*] She's in the room!

PATRICIA'S VOICE

She's not then!

[*Her laughing face peers round the corner of the dormer window.*]

MOYRA

[*Pointing to it, speechless.*] Look! Look!

O'RAFFERTY

Where are you, you pooka? [*He sees her.*] What the — what the plague are you doing up there? How the mischief did you get there? You'll break every bone in your body, and serve you right! Oh, whirra, whirra, come down at once, you little imp of perdition, till I talk to you. Why for don't you answer when you're spoken to?

PATRICIA

[*Laughing.*] I'm waiting till you take breath, Father aroon.

O'RAFFERTY

Don't answer me! Come down at once!

PATRICIA

Easier said than done. Wait till I turn on my stomach.

MOYRA

[*Horrified.*] Hold your whisht!

PATRICIA

[*Disappearing.*] I'm coming!

O'RAFFERTY

[*Anxiously to* MOYRA.] Did she hear about the marriage?

MOYRA

She wouldn't have been laughing if she had.

[*A long, well filled stocking comes slowly down through the dormer window.*]

MOYRA

[*Seeing it; shocked and indignant.*] Holy Saints, put it in! [*To* O'RAFFERTY.] Turn away, your Riverence!

PATRICIA'S VOICE

What's the matter now?

MOYRA

Your leg, you omadaun! Yards of your leg! Put it away, cover it up! Have you no shame?

PATRICIA'S VOICE

Why for will I be ashamed o' my leg? Help me down!

[MOYRA *reaches for the leg and takes hold of the foot. She pulls at the leg and it comes down in her hand.*

She throws it on ground, shrieking. The stocking is stuffed with straw and the open end is tied up with a garter.]

PATRICIA'S VOICE

There! Now you've pulled my leg off, and how will I come down at all?

O'RAFFERTY

Sure she's a very imp o' devilry! [*Shouting at the dormer window.*] Come down this instant minute! [*No answer.*]

MOYRA

[*Crosses to* O'RAFFERTY.] Och, my heart's in my mouth. Now we must fetch a ladder.

[*Enter* PATRICIA *through the turret door. She is in a short skirt, and has only one stocking on. Her hair tumbles wildly about her; her clothes are covered with the dust of the roof; she carries her shoes in her hand.*]

PATRICIA

[*At door.*] What will you want a ladder for?

MOYRA

[*To* PATRICIA; *speechless.*] Oh, you! — Oh, you! [*She hugs and kisses her.*] You young devil! [*To* O'RAFFERTY.] Saving your presence. And look at the state you're in! [*She dusts her.*] And only one stocking!

PATRICIA

[*Flinging her shoes in a corner.*] We'll soon put that right. [*She sits on a stool and whips off the other stocking; which she throws at* MOYRA.] There!

MOYRA

[*Picking up the stockings and shoes and putting them out of sight.*] Och, you contrairy critter!

O'RAFFERTY

[*To* PATRICIA, *sententiously.*] Now, Lady Patricia, perhaps you'll be telling us what you was doing in that unusual and precarious position.

PATRICIA

[*Sitting; quite calmly.*] Oh, there's a nest of house-martins up there, and a fledgling had fallen out of it before 'twas ready, and was lying on the grass unable to take wing, with the old birds fluttering round it, nearly mad with sorrow. So I had to put it back, of course. [*Rises.*] Wouldn't you have done the same?

MOYRA

[*Laughing.*] If pigs could fly?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Severely, to* MOYRA.] Speak for yourself. [*To* PA-

TRICIA.] What's the use of all my learning you manners, if the upshot's that you climb roofs like a — like a —

PATRICIA

Like a fairy —?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Severely.*] That was *not* the word I was thinking of.

PATRICIA

[*Takes his arm.*] That wasn't your teaching, Father darling; that was Daddy's. Ever since I was born a girl he's been making a boy of me.

O'RAFFERTY

Till you're neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.

PATRICIA

[*With an elaborate curtsey and an entire change of manner.*] I crave pardon, *Reverendissime!* I can be any one of them according to my company. [*She hands him his fiddle and bow.*] Oh, here's your fiddle, Father aroon. Play up! and see whether the grace have gone out o' me.

MOYRA

Eh! do now! 'Tis a pure joy to be watching her and listening to you.

O'RAFFERTY

No, no! [*Clears his throat.*] Moyra is wishful to be talking to you.

MOYRA

[*Eagerly.*] Not I! Not I! 'Tis his Riverence would have a word with you!

PATRICIA

[*Forcing the fiddle on him.*] Play and talk, Father; and I'll dance and listen.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Sits on one of the stools. He plays softly a stately dance and talks tenderly through the music, while* PATRICIA *dances.*]

Forget your tomboy ways, then. The wild bogs vanish; the ruined castle's gone; Moyra's room is a stately hall. You're dressed in silver and gold, and on your neck are glittering gems. 'Tis not a poor parish priest playing a cracked fiddle, but the music floods you like the waves when you swim. Do you see the great ladies curtseying? Do you see the Lords bowing till their plumes touch the floor?

PATRICIA

[*Dancing.*] I see—! I see—! Moyra [*curtseys to* MOYRA], you are the Queen, and I bow to you and bend

to you! [*To* O'Rafferty.] Was it like that at the court in Portugal when you was there?

O'RAFFERTY

Ay, was it! Hark! I put the sun in my tune! Hark again! — That's the young Princess, so sweet and stately; that's Catherine of Braganza.

PATRICIA

She that is now Queen of England?

O'RAFFERTY

She, herself, God save her! [*Alluding to his fiddle.*] Hark to her! So gracious, so timid! Hark to her; speaking to me as kindly as though I was the Holy Father himself.

PATRICIA

[*Still dancing.*] Was it lovely at court, Father?

O'RAFFERTY

Ay, was it! With the King and Queen on their golden throne — !

MOYRA

[*Rocking herself in ecstasy.*] Glory be to God!

PATRICIA

And is it as lovely at the court of King Charles?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Still playing.*] No doubt, no doubt; though King Charles is a heretic. God grant his gentle Queen may open his heart.

PATRICIA

[*Dancing.*] I want to go to court, Father.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Stopping his playing abruptly.*] Eh —? I nearly dropped my fiddle.

PATRICIA

[*Making a rhyming jingle of it.*] I want to go to court; I want to see the King; I want to love the little Queen, and wear a golden ring.

MOYRA

Begob! It's the pothery she's making up!

PATRICIA

'Tis the song I sing in my mind all the day long.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Crossing to* MOYRA—*slyly.*] Who knows, eh, Moyra? Perhaps when she's married? [*Insisting.*] Eh, Moyra?

MOYRA

Leave me be.

PATRICIA

Married? How will I be married in this wilderness?

O'RAFFERTY

[*To* MOYRA.] Now, woman!

MOYRA

[*To* O'RAFFERTY.] Play up, then, to give me heart!
[O'RAFFERTY *plays an Irish jig.*]

PATRICIA

[*Clapping her hands with delight.*] O, Father! A jig!
[*She dances.*]

MOYRA

[*Working herself up.*] Eh! That makes the blood run! Here comes an Irish lad a-wooing! and he has your father's good will; and he'll take his Irish bride to London town, and dance with her before the King. And it's, oh! but the Lords and the Ladies stand agape, to see the smile upon your face, the beauty of your shape! [*She, herself, has fallen into the rhythm of the jig as well as her old bones will allow her.*] Whirroo-whoo!

PATRICIA

[*Comes to her, laughing out loud.*] Moyra! Moyra! Is it mad you've gone all at once?
[*They all three dance.*]

MOYRA

[*With increasing excitement.*] Play, Father, play! Dance acushla, dance! Round about and up and down! Dance into your bridal gown? For your father's said the word, and the wedding bells are heard — Soon, very soon, You shall be a wife aroon. Father here the Mass will sing! You shall wear the wedding ring! — At the wedding feast so gaily, I shall curtsey. Oh, my lady — oh, my lady — [*with an outburst.*] Tim O'Reilly!

PATRICIA

[*Violently.*] Stop!

[O'RAFFERTY *ends abruptly on a hideous discord. He has been as excited as* MOYRA. *Now the old couple are images of abject fear.*]

PATRICIA

[*Speaks with dangerous calmness.*] What name was you pleased to mention?

MOYRA

[*Anxiously.*] Play, your Riverence!

[*He tries to begin.*]

PATRICIA

[*To* O'RAFFERTY, *forgetting her manners.*] Hold your whisht! [*To* MOYRA.] Now, Moyra!

[O'RAFFERTY *sneaks to the dresser and picks up his hat.*]

MOYRA

Did I mention a name?

PATRICIA

You said Tim O'Reilly —

MOYRA

Then why for do you ask me?

[O'RAFFERTY *is sneaking away.*]

PATRICIA

[*Sternly.*] Father! Stay where you are!

[O'RAFFERTY *stops short.*]

[*Looking from one to the other.*] Is this a joke betune you?

[*Pause — they hang their heads guiltily.*]

It's no joke, I see.

O'RAFFERTY

You're — you're coming on in years. Your father — [*At a loss for words, he blows his nose.*]

PATRICIA

[*Refusing to help him out.*] Yes?

O'RAFFERTY

He wishes you well; he's for setting you up —

PATRICIA

He's for clearing me out o' the place; is that it?

O'RAFFERTY

A widowman's house is no place for a young girl.

PATRICIA

That depends on the widowman. But leave that. [*To* MOYRA.] You mentioned Tim O'Reilly.

MOYRA

A slip o' the tongue.

PATRICIA

[*Walking up to* O'RAFFERTY.] Do you mind the time I laid my horsewhip across him for trying to kiss me?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Backing away — weakly.*] Did ye now?

PATRICIA

Did I? I did so. What's wrong with you both? [*Looks at them both.*] It's serious earnest is it, and my father wants me to marry that blathermuskite?

MOYRA

So his Riverence says.

O'RAFFERTY

So your father says.

PATRICIA

[*To* MOYRA.] And Daddy asked you to broach the glorious news?

MOYRA

[*Hastily.*] Asked his Riverence.

PATRICIA

Dad's frightened and sends his Reverence; and he's frightened and puts it on my nurse; and she's so frightened she has to work herself into Saint Vitus's dance before she can speak. You poor souls! — Now, let's be reasonable. [*She sits on a stool.*] I'll ask you one question; and if you answer "Yes," I'll pleasure my father.

O'RAFFERTY

It's an angel you are entirely to take it so sweetly.

MOYRA

[*To* O'RAFFERTY.] Whisht, your Riverence, there's a little devil in the corner of her eye.

O'RAFFERTY

[*To* PATRICIA *who is sunk in thought.*] Ahem! — the question?

PATRICIA

[*Takes* MOYRA's *hands.*] Yes. Moyra —

[MOYRA *kneels at* PATRICIA's *side.*]

You nursed my mother, and you saw me born. You've spent your life loving me, and giving me a clean soul in a clean body —

MOYRA

Glory be to God!

PATRICIA

Father!

[*He comes up to her.*]

You've taught me all I know; and what is it you call me, Father?

O'RAFFERTY

[*With deep tenderness.*] The apple of my eye and the pride of my soul. Avourneen!

PATRICIA

Now comes the question; and you are to answer as if my dead mother was listening —

[*All cross themselves.*]

which she is. Can I marry Timothy O'Reilly? — Moyra? — Father?

O'RAFFERTY

[*After a great struggle, explodes.*] By the powers —

MOYRA *and* O'RAFFERTY — Begorra! No! [*Together.*] No!

PATRICIA

[*Gets up laughing.*] Why, there's an end o' the matter then, and let's say no more about it.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Ruefully.*] Och, Pat! It's the father of you will be saying things, and doing 'em, too! He'll keep you on bread and water till you consent.

PATRICIA

[*Facing him.*] Have you ever got anything out of me by force?

O'RAFFERTY

[*With conviction.*] Divil a thing!

MOYRA

But what will you do, alanna?

PATRICIA

[*Laughing.*] I'll appeal to King Charles.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Goes to the dresser, picks up his fiddle, bow, and hat.*] And him in London Town! You might as well say you'll appeal to the Great Mogul.

PATRICIA

[*Dreamily, wrapt in the new idea.*] London Town isn't at the world's end.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Coming to her.*] And what, av you please, am I to say to your father?

PATRICIA

Oh, Man of Eternity, temporise!

O'RAFFERTY

Whirra, Whirra! 'Twill be a bad quarter of an hour, and you may expect his Lordship here as fast as flogged horses can bring him! What he'll say to you, and do to you, I won't even hint at. [*He is going, but turns back.*] But you — nothing rash. Nothing headstrong! Mind!

PATRICIA

[*Lost in thought.*] No: I'll think it out: I'll think it out.

O'RAFFERTY

Think of the house-martin that fell out of its nest. *I* cannot climb roofs to put you back. There, there! [*He puts his hands on her head.*] God's blessing on you, acushla!

[PATRICIA *crosses herself.*]

[*He wipes his eyes.*] Well, well?

[*Exit.*]

[PATRICIA *waits a moment; then turns excitedly to* MOYRA *who is sobbing.*]

PATRICIA

Moyra! How much money's in the stocking?

MOYRA

Glory be to God, what's in the wind now?

PATRICIA

[*Shakes her — laughing.*] Oh, you — you Irishwoman! — will you answer a question?

MOYRA

Sure 'tis an elegant kiahtha of goold.

PATRICIA

Show me the stocking, woman, show it!

MOYRA

'Tis under the flure. [*She comes from the fire, ladle in hand to the centre of the room, where she kneels and begins prizing the board up with the handle of the ladle.*]

PATRICIA

I know it. I want to see it! [*To herself, rapt.*] London's not at the world's end. [*She kneels.*]

MOYRA

Don't fooster me. Wait till I get the board up, bad cess to it.

[MOYRA *lifts the board up and produces a stocking foot, filled with gold and tied with a piece of twine.*]

MOYRA

[*Holding up the stocking foot.*] Here 'tis. As your sainted mother gave ut me. "For Patricia," says she, with her dying breath; "for Patricia, when she comes to need it."

PATRICIA

And I need it now! Tell me how much it is!

MOYRA

A hundred and twenty goolden broadpieces.

PATRICIA

A hundred and twenty broadpieces? Why, that's a fortune! But are you sure?

MOYRA

A hundred and twenty it was, when it was put there, and why for should it be less now?

PATRICIA

Count it! Count it! No! Let me! Turn it out!

[MOYRA *turns out the gold on the floor;* PATRICIA *counts feverishly.*]

PATRICIA

Sh! Softly! Five — ten — fifteen — twenty —

(THE SCENE CHANGES)

SCENE II

[*The picturesque, galleried courtyard of the Bear Inn, Drury Lane. The great gate is at the back, and the street is visible beyond it. Entrance to the stable on the left; entrance to the house on the right. Under the galleries are rough tables, stools and barrels.*]

[*A Maid is airing a counterpane on the balcony.* MONTAGU *is leaning over the balcony. The* DRAWER *is polishing a table.*]

[*The Host comes out of the house door on the right.*]

HOST

Lively now. There's been a battle at the cockpit, and the quality will be here anon, clamouring for wine.

DRAWER

Ay, ay, Lord Berkeley, Lord Ashley, Lord Bristol —

HOST

[*With emphasis.*] And the Duke of Buckingham!

DRAWER

The tan gets in their throats. They'll have a pretty thirst on 'em —

[*Shouting without and a mob passes at the back.*]

HOST

There! 'Tis out! God send us no rabble.

[*Enter at the back* BUCKINGHAM, BRISTOL, ASHLEY *and* BERKELEY.]

DRAWER

[*Up L.*] The rabble know the Bear in Drury Lane is a house for their betters.

HOST

[*Seeing* BUCKINGHAM.] The Duke himself!

[*The* HOST *meets the gentlemen obsequiously.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*To* BRISTOL.] Fairly won, Bristol; your red dun didn't know when he was beaten.

BRISTOL

Ay, Gad, Buckingham; yet your Shropshire red was a good bird.

BERKELEY

[*Entering arm in arm with* ASHLEY.] Oh, Ashley, how much more profitable is a good cock fight than a beastly theatre!

BRISTOL

Why tell us what we all know, Berkeley?

BUCKINGHAM

Come, you bubbling rogues, what shall we wash the dust away with? Rhenish?

ASHLEY

Foh! Too sour on the stomach.

BUCKINGHAM

Hippocras then?

BRISTOL

Ay: claret and spice, and all things nice, in one glorious gurgle!

BUCKINGHAM

D'ye hear, Host?

HOST

At once, my lord.

[*He runs into the Inn.*]

BERKELEY

Ay — ay — Your cockfights are all very well, but they lack the essential.

ASHLEY

Mention it.

BERKELEY

Woman.

BUCKINGHAM

Han't you had your fill of her, Charles?

[HOST *and* DRAWER *bring wine.*]

ASHLEY

Not he; for like a good retriever, he don't hunt for himself, but for his master.

BERKELEY

[*Stiffly.*] I trust you are jesting, Anthony.

BRISTOL

Ah! here's the liquor!

ASHLEY

[*To* BERKELEY.] Look not so glum for a little raillery, Charles. And here's the twenty pieces your bird won. [*He spreads them on table.*]

BERKELEY

[*Pocketing the money.*] At that rate you can jest all night.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Raising his cup.*] The King!

[*All remove their hats.*]

And destruction to his enemies!

[*They light long clay pipes at a small lantern which the* HOST *has brought.*]

BRISTOL

[*Laughing.*] Faith, that's drinking to him and against him in one draught, for poor Rowley is his own worst enemy.

BUCKINGHAM

I meant the Dutch, George.

BRISTOL

Well, and they'd not be his enemies, but for his folly in marrying the Portugal woman.

[*Enter* SIDNEY MONTAGU *from the house. He stands and listens.*]

ASHLEY

Ay, they fear the Papists.

BRISTOL

That marriage has brought him foes nearer home than the Dutch.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Laughing.*] Ay. Every woman he has ever loved thirsts for his blood.

BERKELEY

And chiefest, Babs Castlemaine.

MONTAGU

Gentlemen —

[*They all turn.*]

BUCKINGHAM

Young Sidney Montagu! Well met!

MONTAGU

The Countess of Castlemaine honours me with her friendship —

BRISTOL

Already?

MONTAGU

And I hope no one here will say ought against her.

BERKELEY

Contrariwise! We have reason to speak well of her.

ASHLEY

The very best reason.

BUCKINGHAM

In token whereof, we'll drink to the lady.

[*He declaims.*]

Fair Castlemaine no grief shall know
No peril o'er her hover;
For never a man can be her foe,
Since every man's her lover!

[*All laugh.*]

MONTAGU

I am now to the court, gentlemen; but I've lived where

women are reverenced, and where that reverence is enforced with the sword.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Rises and places his hand familiarly on* MONTAGU'S *shoulder.*] Sit and drink, boy, and don't show so much plaguey, crop-eared virtue. 'Tis out of mode, now Charles has come into his own again.

MONTAGU

If I took you too gravely 'tis that I am in a grave humour, and so I wish you a good day.

[*There is a commotion at the great gate.*]

BERKELEY

The Castlemaine herself, by all that's prodigious. [*To* MONTAGU.] Now you can't go!

MONTAGU

[*Laughing.*] I will stay, to hear what you say to her face.

BERKELEY

No worse than we say behind her back, I warrant you. [LADY CASTLEMAINE'S *chair is brought in.* ASHLEY *hurries to open it.* LADY ROBERTS *and* LADY MYDDLETON *follow. The ladies carry their masks in their hands and hold them to their faces as they enter the Inn-yard.*]

ASHLEY

[*Helping* LADY CASTLEMAINE *out of her chair.*] My Lady Castlemaine —!

CASTLEMAINE

Ashley! Egad, ladies, we're in luck.

BRISTOL

[*With a mock bow.*] Queen of Hearts.

BERKELEY

Queen of Beauty!

BUCKINGHAM

Astrea and her Nymphs.
[*The ladies curtsey.*]

CASTLEMAINE

More fine speeches than ever I heard in a pot-house before.

MYDDLETON

Oh, Barbara, you'll not go into an inn!

CASTLEMAINE

Where else should I go when I'm thirsty?

ROBERTS

But there are men here.

CASTLEMAINE

Don't we know 'em?

BRISTOL

[*Leading* MYDDLETON *and* ROBERTS *down to one of the tables.*] Nymphs and Dryads by the universe! Come in fearlessly. The company's good; the hour propitious; and the wine — er — passable.

CASTLEMAINE

Thou ancient iniquity! [*She sees* MONTAGU *who had retired under the gallery.*] Who is that standing mumchance?

BUCKINGHAM

Oh, happy Montagu, her Grace of Castlemaine condescends to ask who you are!

MONTAGU

[*Coming forward.*] I dare not recall myself to her Grace's memory.

CASTLEMAINE

Faith! 'Tis the pretty fellow I met at supper last night. You may kiss my hand.

MONTAGU

[*Doing so.*] That your Grace should remember!

CASTLEMAINE

Oh! I have a good memory for young faces.

[*To* BRISTOL.] 'Tis the old ones I am apt to forget. [*To* MONTAGU.] I desire your better acquaintance.

BUCKINGHAM

But what shall we wet these pretty lips with? Sherris sack? Rhenish? What you will?

CASTLEMAINE

[*Taking up one of the cups and smelling it.*] Hippocras? Gad! Hippocras for us — eh, Roberts? [BUCKINGHAM *instructs the* HOST, *who fetches it with the* DRAWER.]

ROBERTS

No, faith, I couldn't! Indeed and truly.

ASHLEY

[*To* ROBERTS.] Afraid to wash away the last kiss?

ROBERTS

Fie! At least 'twas not yours.

CASTLEMAINE

Tush! We're out for a frolic; let's be natural. These are all proper fellows who tell no tales. Put thy blushes with thy pulvilic — and thou, too, Myddleton. Are we country hoydens?

MYDDLETON

[*Laughing.*] Oh, Babs, and our reputations?

CASTLEMAINE

Why, Gad! If we ran after our reputations, we should be out of breath 'ere we caught 'em!

BRISTOL

And then you wouldn't know 'em again.

CASTLEMAINE

They'd be black enough if you'd touched 'em.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Points to a stool by a small table.*] Here, my Queen, is your throne and [*attempting to sit next to her*] I will be your slave!

CASTLEMAINE

[*Waving him aside.*] No, no! [*Indicates* MONTAGU.] My prince shall sit here.

BUCKINGHAM

[*When they are all seated.*] And now; what brings you all to Drury Lane?

ASHLEY

I warrant 'twas Love.

CASTLEMAINE

No. Lilly.

ASHLEY

Love and lilies; a fair conjunction.

CASTLEMAINE

Lilly, the astrologer, jackanapes.

BRISTOL

Gad! Have you had your horoscope cast? Did he find me in your fair hands?

CASTLEMAINE

No. I had washed 'em.

BRISTOL

Cruel! [*Moves to the big table and sits in front of it.*]

CASTLEMAINE

He was but a dull dog to-day. Could speak of nought but portents from the low countries.

BUCKINGHAM

Aha! The Dutch anger at the King's marriage?

CASTLEMAINE

Oh, Gad! The Portugal woman! As if she could move the stars!

BUCKINGHAM

Well — she's put your nose out of joint, pretty Babs!

MONTAGU

[*Indignantly.*] My lord —!

BUCKINGHAM

Ay, I forgot. [*To* CASTLEMAINE.] Here's a new champion for you. He's for slitting our livers whenever we speak of you.

CASTLEMAINE

Why? Do ye speak so ill?

ASHLEY

Contrariwise. He thought we spoke too well.

CASTLEMAINE

[*To* MONTAGU.] I thank you, sir. But you must never take Buckingham more seriously than he takes himself. He's made a jest of life, and he'll die on the point of it. [BERKELEY *laughs.*] As for Berkeley — who minds a candlestick?

BERKELEY

[*Rising.*] A candlestick, madam?

CASTLEMAINE

Does not a candlestick hold the candle?

BUCKINGHAM

We'd best hold our tongues when Babs' is wagging; for 'tis brisk.

BERKELEY

And poisoned.

CASTLEMAINE

I fight with whatever weapons are used against me.

MONTAGU

In a right cause.

CASTLEMAINE

You are new to the court, sir?

MONTAGU

To the court of England, ay, Madam. I am lately from France.

CASTLEMAINE

You must not believe the worst my friends say of me.

MONTAGU

Whoever sees you, believes what he sees, and loves what he believes.

BUCKINGHAM

[*To* BERKELEY.] Gad! We're too many here!

CASTLEMAINE

Very prettily put, and it were well if these barbarians had a little of your gallantry.

BRISTOL

You do well to be kind to him, now that you have leisure from court.

CASTLEMAINE

Oh, venerable George, you shall see me at court again, ere the week's out.

BERKELEY

If I see that I'll eat my hat.

CASTLEMAINE

You shall not only see it, but bring it about — Sir Pandarus.

BERKELEY

[*Indignantly.*] Madam —!

CASTLEMAINE

[*Contemptuously.*] Did I call you out of your name? [*To* MONTAGU.] You and I must grow better acquainted.

MONTAGU

I am your servant always.

CASTLEMAINE

Wait on me at supper to-night. I shall be alone.

MONTAGU

I would 'twere sunset!

ROBERTS

Egad, Babs takes the shortest cut!

MYDDLETON

Surrenders ere she be summoned.

ROBERTS

And takes the besieger captive.

BUCKINGHAM

Foregad, we must toast the lovers! [*Cup in hand.*] Here's to the fortunate twain.

MONTAGU

[*Laughing.*] Oh, have your jest. We'll not listen.

BRISTOL

[*Rises.*] *Omnia vincit amor!* Love softens the fire-eater.

BUCKINGHAM

An epithalamium! Silence! Silence!

Chaste moon —'tis broad daylight, but I claim poetic licence —

> Chaste moon, pale sovereign of the night,
> Look down with favour on thy votaries,
> Who celebrate the nuptial rite
> Without a priest, or church, or notaries.

[*Laughter and applause. Meanwhile* MR. *and* MRS. PEPYS *have entered, arm in arm, at the back, followed by* MERCER.]

PEPYS

[*To his wife.*] Company, Elizabeth. We'll go elsewhere.

MRS. PEPYS

La, they won't eat us! Let us see life.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Seeing them.*] What! My good friend, Master Samuel Pepys —!

PEPYS

[*Stiffly.*] Your servant, my lord! Come, Elizabeth.

BUCKINGHAM

No, no, Master Secretary. If you've found a treasure, let us share your good fortune.

PEPYS

[*Severely.*] My wife.

BUCKINGHAM

Present me to virtue then; for 'tis plaguey scarce.

PEPYS

[*Unwillingly.*] His Grace the Duke of Buckingham.
[BUCKINGHAM *bows.* PEPYS *tries to lead his wife away.* ASHLEY *stops them, and then* BERKELEY.]

THE OTHER MEN

[*Except* MONTAGU.] And me! and me!

PEPYS

[*To* ELIZABETH.] I'll never take you abroad again.
Sir Charles Berkeley, Lord Ashley, Lord Bristol —
[MONTAGU *has risen.*]

MONTAGU

Sidney Montagu, at your service.

PEPYS

Sir Sidney —

MONTAGU

[*Laughing.*] No, no. Plain ensign.

CASTLEMAINE

Are you forgetful of old friends, Mr. Pepys?

PEPYS

[*To himself.*] Oh, curse it! [*Clumsily.*] Madam, I had not dared —

CASTLEMAINE

Present your wife.

PEPYS

She is but a simple soul, your Grace.

MRS. PEPYS

[*Taking off her mask.*] La, Samuel —

CASTLEMAINE

A damned pretty soul, though. [*To her, very graciously.*] I am Babs Castlemaine, and these are my friends, Mrs. Myddleton and Mrs. Roberts.

[*Elaborate curtseys. The women take* MRS. PEPYS *apart.*]

PEPYS

[*Furious.*] The devil take the woman!

BUCKINGHAM

[*Enjoying his discomfort.*] What's the matter, Mr. Pepys? Are you proud of the honour shown your pretty wife?

PEPYS

Too much honour — too much honour.

BERKELEY

And where do you hail from now?

PEPYS

The King's theatre, Sir Charles.

BERKELEY

What was played?

PEPYS

[*Contemptuously.*] Oh, Hamlet, of Shakespeare. I had hoped for Polichinello, but they changed the bill after we had paid.

BRISTOL

Well done?

PEPYS

Too well, sir. It was all set out in scenes as if it had been an Italian opera. Lord! the expense they go to now. Not in the spirit of Shakespeare, sir! They used not these excesses when I was a boy.

BERKELEY

But a fine play, what?

PEPYS

'Tis the fashion to say so. But were't not for the acting of Betterton as the Danish Prince, 'twould be but a poor thing. [*He imitates* BETTERTON.] "Unhand

me, gentlemen. By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him who lets me. Lead on, I'll follow!"

[*The men applaud. The ladies laugh.*]

Ah, Betterton's a great man!

BRISTOL

Ay, but Shakespeare —

PEPYS

[*Confidentially, to* BUCKINGHAM.] And who should we see come upon the stage but my wife's late woman, Gosnell. A pretty creature; I vow. But look at the favouritism of your theatrical folk! Though she hath as tuneful a voice and as straight a leg as any of them —

BUCKINGHAM

Experto Credo!

PEPYS

[*With a glance at his wife.*] Mum, sir! — Well, not a song would they give her, nor a dance.

ASHLEY

Too bad! They are afraid of her.

PEPYS

So I told her. For I went to her tiring room —

ASHLEY

Dog!

PEPYS

[*Sanctimoniously.*] But, Lord! To see the paint and powder, and to hear the way the saucy wenches talk, do make a man grieve! *

CASTLEMAINE

[*Comes down with* MRS. PEPYS.] Mr. Secretary, why have you never brought this fair creature to court?

PEPYS

Hum — we are plain folk, your Grace.

CASTLEMAINE

[*To* MRS. PEPYS.] Faith, you shall come under my wing.

MRS. PEPYS

La! Samuel would never let me.

CASTLEMAINE

Ay; and you shall dance a coranto before Charles himself.

PEPYS

[*Crossly.*] She doesn't dance.

CASTLEMAINE

Oh, foh! [*To* MRS. PEPYS.] I'll put you in the way of the best dancing-master in town.

* Pepys's Diary.

PEPYS

[*Takes his wife's arm.*] Come, Elizabeth, 'tis high time we went home. Footpads are abroad.

MRS. PEPYS

La, Samuel, 'tis seldom enough I see company.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Takes* PEPYS *by the arm.*] Nonsense, Master Secretary! You have not drank yet!

PEPYS

Sir! I have vowed not to touch wine till Christmas.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Holding a cup under his nose.*] A draught of Hippocras, though!

PEPYS

Hum — a mixed compound drink, and therefore not any wine. Well, God forgive me. [*Takes the cup.*] The King! [*He lifts his hat.*]

ASHLEY

[*To* MRS. PEPYS *while* PEPYS *is drinking.*] When may one see this paragon again? [*He takes her hand.*]

MRS. PEPYS

La, sir; ask my husband.

ASHLEY

[*Laughing.*] Egad, no! That's not the idea!

[*A rabble of street-boys runs on laughing and shouting. Enter* PATRICIA *on horseback, at the back. She is dressed as a young man, and cuts a gallant figure. She is travel-stained, and the horse is woebegone.*]

[BRISTOL *comes forward. The landlord comes out of the Inn door.*]

BERKELEY

Oho! More company!

BRISTOL

Something from the shires.

PATRICIA

[*With a swagger.*] House! House! What, House! [*To* BRISTOL, *who is laughing at her.*] Are you the landlord?

BRISTOL

[*Furious.*] I am not, sir!

PATRICIA

Well — fetch him. [*She dismounts.*]

HOST

Here, your worship.

PATRICIA

Your best room; your best supper. [*To the* DRAWER.] And you, fellow, look well after this good beast. [*The* DRAWER *leads the horse off into the stable.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*To his group, who are watching amused.*] The Duke of Turnitops, I warrant.

HOST

[*Indicates the entrance to the Inn.*] Will your worship step this way?

PATRICIA

Not I, faith. I'll sup out o' doors. 'Tis as much as I can do to breathe at all in this foul city of yours. [*Points to the small table.*] Lay supper here.

HOST

[*Deprecatingly.*] The quality, sir —

PATRICIA

Do as I bid you, or I seek another house. Presto. [*She sits on the bench behind the table.*]

CASTLEMAINE

A vastly personable boy!

MONTAGU

[*Jealous at once.*] An impudent puppy!

BUCKINGHAM

We'll roast him.

[*The maid brings food for* PATRICIA, *who at once falls to.*]

HOST

And what will your honour please to drink?

PATRICIA

Clear spring water, if such a thing's to be had.

HOST

'Tis to be had, but gentlemen never call for it.

PATRICIA

I have called for it. Get it!

[*The* HOST *shrugs his shoulders contemptuously and exit.*]

[BUCKINGHAM *comes to* PATRICIA *who is eating ravenously.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*With mock civility.*] Young gentleman —

PATRICIA

[*With her mouth full, not looking up.*] Servant.

BUCKINGHAM

No doubt your worship's honour is newly from foreign parts?

PATRICIA

[*As before.*] No doubt.

BUCKINGHAM

And your worship's honour, judging by your honour's worship's horse, is a person of great consequence?

PATRICIA

Ye're a young man of some perspicacity. I am that. As for the horse, I'm glad you like him, for I want to sell him.

BRISTOL

Faith! If you throw in the saddle, I'll offer — a shilling.

PATRICIA

[*Eyeing him up and down.*] And where will you borrow the shilling?

CASTLEMAINE

[*With a laugh.*] Take that, Bristol.

ASHLEY

[*Coming to* PATRICIA.] No doubt your worship has important business at court?

PATRICIA

[*Eating, unperturbed.*] I have so.

ASHLEY

And may we know what it is?

PATRICIA

My own.

CASTLEMAINE

Checkmate, Ashley. [*To* MONTAGU.] I vow to Gad, a pretty wit.

MYDDLETON

I love his rosy cheeks.

ROBERTS

And his bright eyes, then!

MONTAGU

[*Furious; swaggers up to* PATRICIA.] Do you think it is good taste to thrust yourself thus amongst gentlemen who do not desire your company?

PATRICIA

[*Looks up for the first time; gazes straight into his face; speaks with the utmost amiability.*] Young gentleman, let me assure you, they cannot desire mine less than I theirs.

[MONTAGU *leaves her with an angry gesture.*]

BERKELEY

[*To* PATRICIA.] Young sprig, let me give you good advice —

PATRICIA

[*Resuming her meal.*] If you can spare it.

BERKELEY

Learn to address your betters with more respect.

PATRICIA

Sure an' I will, when I find 'em.

BUCKINGHAM

Oh, leave the dull dog.

ASHLEY

Ay, we're neglecting Venus. [*To* MRS. PEPYS.] A word — [*He takes her apart.*]

PEPYS

[*Calls.*] Mercer!

MERCER

[*Comes forward.*] Ay, sir.

PEPYS

Bid your mistress make ready for home at once, good wench.

MERCER

His Lordship is talking to her.

PEPYS

Damn it, Mercer, that's why. [*As* MERCER *turns to go.*] Mercer. [*She turns back; he looks cautiously round, then pinches her cheek.*] That's all — at present. [MERCER *goes up to* MRS. PEPYS *and* ASHLEY.]

MONTAGU

[*To* LADY CASTLEMAINE.] So then, to-night —

[LADY CASTLEMAINE *is watching* PATRICIA *and trying to attract her attention.*]

CASTLEMAINE

[*Indifferently.*] To-night?— O, ay; we'll speak of it again.

[*She crosses to* PATRICIA, *leaving* MONTAGU *furious.*]

CASTLEMAINE

[*Leaning over* PATRICIA'S *table.*] I like your looks, young gentleman.

PATRICIA

[*Eating.*] I would have said the same to you, had you given me time.

CASTLEMAINE

Will you make room for me on your bench?

PATRICIA

[*Continuing her meal.*] Oh, as much as you like.

CASTLEMAINE

Nay — not too much. [*She sits beside* PATRICIA.] You must take no heed of these giddy lords.

PATRICIA

Are they lords? Look at that, now! Drinking in an ale-house.

CASTLEMAINE

Now, you and I must be friends.

PATRICIA

Willingly. What is your name?

CASTLEMAINE

[*Laughing.*] You go straight to the matter!

PATRICIA

'Tis the nearest way.

CASTLEMAINE

Rogue! Do you always take that?

PATRICIA

Sure, if I want to get anywhere.

CASTLEMAINE

[*Tapping* PATRICIA's *fingers.*] Fie! You are a dangerous boy.

PATRICIA

[*Honestly amazed.*] Dangerous? How?

CASTLEMAINE

Oh, I know — and so do you. But you asked my name.

PATRICIA

An hour ago.

CASTLEMAINE

[*Watching him.*] I am the Countess of Castlemaine.

PATRICIA

[*Drinking: speaks into her cup — unimpressed.*] Yes?

CASTLEMAINE

[*With a slight hesitation.*] Have you never heard of me?

PATRICIA

Sorrow a thing. [*Thinks that rather rude, and looks at her ingratiatingly.*] But now I shall never forget you.

CASTLEMAINE

Prettily answered. And how smooth the rogue's cheek is. [*She strokes it.*] And what is your name?

PATRICIA

Patri —[*Coughs.*] Patrick — Patrick O'Brien — your servant.

CASTLEMAINE

Patrick shall be my servant, if he will. [*Moves closer.*] You would not tell those sparks your errand; will you tell me?

PATRICIA

Gladly. I am come out of Ireland to seek my fortune at court.

CASTLEMAINE

And I will see that you find it.

PATRICIA

[*Not at all grateful.*] Thank you; but my ambition was to serve the Queen.

CASTLEMAINE

Foh! The Portugal woman would only hinder your fortune. I can make you.

PATRICIA

[*Puzzled.*] How is that possible?

CASTLEMAINE

[*Laughing.*] You shall see! [*She rises and turns to the others.*] Buckingham, here is a young gentleman who, by his merits, should go far.

BUCKINGHAM

I doubt not that with your guidance he'll go farther than he dreams of.

MONTAGU

[*Who has been watching* CASTLEMAINE *with increasing jealousy, to* PATRICIA.] An Irish fortune hunter, I perceive.

[*All scenting a quarrel, become attentive.*]

PATRICIA

Do we hunt in couples, sir?

MONTAGU

Are you as ready with your sword as with your tongue?

PATRICIA

[*Calmly, still seated.*] Oh! much readier!

MRS. PEPYS

[*To* PEPYS — *frightened.*] La! Samuel!

MONTAGU

[*Drawing his sword.*] Out with it, then!

CASTLEMAINE

[*Protecting* PATRICIA.] Ruffian! Draw, in the presence of ladies against a stripling!

MONTAGU

[*Sulkily.*] Very well, Madam! [*To* PATRICIA.] You shall escape nothing by hiding behind a petticoat.

[*Drums and shouts in the distance.*]

PATRICIA

[*Jumping to her feet.*] Begorra! [*Banging the table.*] Hiding behind a petticoat is what I'm not doing just! And I'm ready when you are! [*She draws.*]

MONTAGU

[*Speechless.*] When I am!

[*They fight.*]

MIDDLETON

[*Near the gate.*] Hark! A commotion in the street!

[*Trumpets sound. Halberdiers are seen running past. Stones fly.*]

HOST

The Queen! The Queen! Stop the fight!

[*Cries "Down with the Papists." The fight is interrupted.*]

BERKELEY

There is nothing to fear. 'Tis only the Queen with the customary rabble at her heels.

PATRICIA

The Queen! In danger?

BERKELEY

Faith! I'll not risk my skin for her.

PATRICIA

For shame! Mr. Montagu, since you thirst for blood, will you fight for the Queen?

MONTAGU

Foregad, yes!

[*They hurry up to the gate and fight the mob.*]

[THE QUEEN'S *chair appears at the gate. Portuguese gentlemen are at her side with drawn swords, keeping off the mob who press on her. The chair is hurriedly brought into the courtyard. Portuguese Lords and Ladies enter. The Ladies sink fainting into chairs. The Lords attend them. As soon as the chair is in the courtyard* THE QUEEN *jumps out.*]

THE QUEEN

[*With a strong Portuguese accent.*] Here! Ah! *Gracas a Deus.* Here are friends! [*She finds herself face to face with* CASTLEMAINE — *she shrinks away.*] Oh!

CASTLEMAINE

[*With a mock curtsey; insolently.*] Your usual triumph, Majesty?

[PATRICIA *and* MONTAGU *have driven the mob off.*]

PATRICIA

[*Swaggering.*] That's done.

THE QUEEN

I thank you, young gentleman.

PATRICIA

[*Sheathing her sword.*] 'Twas nothing, Madam. You saw how the rogues ran!

THE QUEEN

You shall come with me to the King; he shall hear 'ow you 'ave been ver' brave, ver' generous. [*With a look at* BUCKINGHAM *and the rest.*] Ah, Senhor, you are the first Englishman 'oo 'as shampioned me.

PATRICIA

I'm not an Englishman, your Majesty, I'm an Irishman. [*She takes off her hat, with a magnificent bow; her glorious hair falls all about her.*] And a faymale at that!

[*Stupefaction.*]

[PATRICIA *kneels and kisses* THE QUEEN'S *hand.*]

HALF THE ONLOOKERS

[*To* CASTLEMAINE, *laughing.*] Oh, Babs, Babs!

THE OTHER HALF

[*To* MONTAGU.] Oh, Montagu!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

ACT II

A Hall in Whitehall. At the back an arched opening up two steps, giving access to a transverse corridor. On the right, in the centre of the wall, a beautiful carved fireplace; on the mantelshelf a monumental clock in ormolu, above it the Vandyke portrait of Charles I. Below the fireplace are two tall windows and above it two similar windows, these look out on the Thames. On the left, a small door. In a corner stands an easel, on which is an unfinished portrait of Charles II. An artist [in court dress] is at work on it. Round the walls are gilt tables, stools and chairs. The room is lighted by sconces against the walls and by a beautiful Venetian glass chandelier hanging in the centre. These all carry long thin candles of unbleached wax.

The candles in the sconces are unlighted, the chandelier is lighted.

As the curtain rises, CHIFFINCH, *a small man in a black suit, comes out of door L. backwards bowing low, and speaking into the inner room.*

CHIFFINCH

His Majesty will be here anon, my Lord. [*He closes the door and crosses the hall, towards the fireplace.*] But His Majesty's *not* here, and 'tis seven o' the clock!

AN USHER

[*On the step under the arch.*] Mr. Samuel Pepys.

[*Enter* PEPYS *down the steps. He carries a leather folio, crammed with papers.*]

CHIFFINCH

[*Meeting him.*] Ah! By appointment, I think? [*He holds out his hands.*]

PEPYS

[*Putting his hands behind him; coldly.*] By the King's Gracious command, Mr. Chiffinch.

CHIFFINCH

Ay. [*Indicating the small door.*] Lord Clarendon is already in attendance.

PEPYS

[*Moving towards the door.*] Then I will wait on Lord Clarendon.

CHIFFINCH

One moment. His lordship is to see the King alone.

PEPYS

[*Huffily.*] He is on the same business as I.

CHIFFINCH

My orders, Mr. Pepys.

USHER

Lord Arlington.

[*Enter* LORD ARLINGTON. *He is a tall, thin man preternaturally grave and solemn. He has a scar across his nose, covered by a black patch in the form of a lozenge.*] *

[*The artist bows to* ARLINGTON *and exit C.*]

ARLINGTON

[*To* PEPYS.] Ah, Mr. Secretary —

[*He bows elaborately.* PEPYS *returns the salute.*]

No ill news, I trust?

PEPYS

Of serious consequence, my Lord.

ARLINGTON

A pity it comes to-night, then; for his Majesty is preoccupied with other matters.

PEPYS

[*Hotly.*] They cannot be more grave than this.

* Grammont.

ARLINGTON

[*Severely.*] That is for the King to judge, sir.

USHER

The King.

[*Enter* KING CHARLES II *preceded and followed by grooms with lighted candelabra. The grooms remain in the corridor. The* KING *comes down briskly to* ARLINGTON *L. of him — he looks for a moment at his picture, smiles and taps the artist approvingly on the shoulder. The artist exit.*]

[PEPYS *retires bowing low — the* USHER *moves back to his position.*]

CHARLES

[*To* ARLINGTON — *confidentially.*] Well? Have you spoken with her?

ARLINGTON

[*Very gravely.*] I have conveyed your Majesty's commands. She will wait on your Majesty.

CHARLES

A roguish eye and a tempting lip, eh?

ARLINGTON

Sire, you know I cannot see beyond one pair of eyes.

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] Ay! the faithful husband! Odds fish, man, don't be so uxorious! [*He sees* PEPYS.] Ah, Mr. Secretary?

PEPYS

[*Advancing, with low bows.*] Grave news of the Dutch, sire.

CHARLES

Plague on 'em! I know, I know. [*To* CHIFFINCH.] Is Lord Clarendon here?

CHIFFINCH

[*Indicating the small door.*] Awaiting your pleasure, sire.

CHARLES

[*To* ARLINGTON.] My pleasure! — [*To* PEPYS.] Mr. Secretary, I have a few words for Clarendon in private.

PEPYS

Only one question, sire.

CHARLES

[*Impatiently.*] Well? Well? But Clarendon will scold me for being late.

PEPYS

We shall need an emissary to Breda. Have I your gracious leave to send for Ensign Montagu?

CHARLES

Is it a weighty matter?

PEPYS

Very; but he hath an old head on young shoulders.

CHARLES

I love a young head on old shoulders — but send for him.

[PEPYS *bows, goes up to the* USHER *and whispers; the* USHER *exit.*]

CHARLES

[*Beckons* ARLINGTON *to him.*] Harkee, when she comes, sound her; sound her; give her a little fatherly advice.

ARLINGTON

Your Majesty, I will warn her.

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] Warn her! No, no, no!

ARLINGTON

Warn her of the high fortune in store for her.

CHARLES

Ay, that's better. Yet cautiously. She's new and skittish. Play her, Arlington, play her — [*With a sigh.*] Well! Now for Clarendon. [*To* PEPYS.] You shall

come soon; for, to speak truly, I'm in haste to be rid of you both.

[CHARLES *exit, through the small door,* CHIFFINCH *going out backwards before him.*]

[*The footmen in the corridor exeunt with their candelabra.*]

[*The* USHER *returns to his post, but is only seen intermittently.*]

PEPYS

[*To* ARLINGTON.] How is the Queen, my lord?

ARLINGTON

[*Indifferently.*] Oh, so, so; so, so. The climate, sir, is not in her favour.

PEPYS

Not gravely ill, I trust?

ARLINGTON

I trust not. But she would be better out of England.

PEPYS

Poor woman. [*More confidentially.*] My lord, is it true the Countess of Castlemaine has been summoned to court again?

ARLINGTON

Certainly,

PEPYS

Then I don't wonder the Queen has took to her bed.

ARLINGTON

[*Severely.*] The Queen, sir, has many prudish prejudices; but my Lady Castlemaine's reign will be short this time.

PEPYS

Oh! How do you mean?

ARLINGTON

You are a man of discretion, Mr. Pepys. [*Takes his arm confidentially.*] There is a new beauty at court. If you wish yourself well, get into favour with her; for in a month's time — but I say no more.

PEPYS

I could wish the King more constancy.

ARLINGTON

Impossible. The Queen? A blackamoor, and in ill health. Castlemaine? Satiety, sir. Satiety kills love.

PEPYS

[*Laughing.*] 'Tis fortunate you do not practise as you preach.

ARLINGTON

I, sir? Do you know my wife?

PEPYS

I have not that advantage.

ARLINGTON

When you know her you will understand. Beauty in its full perfection, sir. Such hair! Such eyes! Such lips, ripe for kissing! And such a figure! I vow to gad, sir,— but I will not be more precise.

PEPYS

The true artist ever leaves something to the imagination; but have you no moments of anxiety in a court so full of intriguing gallants?

ARLINGTON

Every one of 'em's perishing of love for her, and I am proud of it! But she and I laugh at 'em! And I am sly, sir; confounded sly. I nurse her love for me. How? With gifts at her altar. 'Tis a profound truth that gifts foster love. Only to-day — guess what I gave her to-day?

PEPYS

'Tis beyond me.

ARLINGTON

A pair of stockings.

PEPYS

Ah!

ARLINGTON

That sounds nothing. But a pair of *green* stockings! A pair of green *silk* stockings! What do you think o' that?

PEPYS

I think of it with — admiration.

ARLINGTON

And fit! My very dear friend, if you could only see how they fit!

[*Enter* CHIFFINCH.]

CHIFFINCH

Mr. Secretary, his Majesty —

PEPYS

[*To* ARLINGTON.] Faith, my lord, the green stockings had put the Dutch fleet out o' my head.

[*Exit followed by* CHIFFINCH.]

[*The* USHER *enters announcing.*]

USHER

Lady Patricia O'Brien! [PATRICIA *appears on the steps.*]

ARLINGTON

[*With a superb bow, from where he stands.*] Ah! So Venus appeared to Æneas!

PATRICIA

Faith, a poor compliment, my lord, for she was his mother! [*She comes down.*]

ARLINGTON

Ay; that's the laugh that has stirred somebody's heart.

PATRICIA

[*Eagerly.*] Who is "somebody," my lord?

ARLINGTON

Mum! For the moment he's occupied. Even Kings have their dull moments. There! I've said it! Clarendon and Mr. Pepys are with him. Tedious stuff! Fleets; ammunition, provender; the Lord knows what! But, presently —! Lilies, eh? and Roses, what?

PATRICIA

And what can the King want with me at all?

ARLINGTON

Patience, patience. Chiffinch will fetch you anon.

PATRICIA

I don't like Chiffinch; an oily little man.

ARLINGTON

Oh, tut, tut! You *must* like Chiffinch; Chiffinch can make you or mar you.

PATRICIA

Thank you for nothing; I'm made already; I'm the Queen's woman, and I love her, and I am very happy.

ARLINGTON

Foh! That's all nothing to what's coming.

PATRICIA

What do you mean? What's coming?

ARLINGTON

You'll see, you'll see. Now, stand still; let me look at you?

[*He walks round her, examining her critically.*]

PATRICIA

[*Turning with him.*] What is there to look at, at all?

ARLINGTON

Your dress.

PATRICIA

[*Alarmed, lest the hooks be undone.*] Ow!

ARLINGTON

I am an authority on dress. Have you seen my wife?

PATRICIA

Not that I know of.

ARLINGTON

Ah, you'd know, if you had. The loveliest woman in the world! and 'tis I dress her.

PATRICIA

Has she no tiring-woman?

ARLINGTON

I mean I choose her materials, oversee the designs, combine the colours. Result: [*Kissing the tips of his fingers.*] perfection! — You'll do; you'll do. Now, curtsey.

PATRICIA

[*Bobs a countrified curtsey.*] Why for will I curtsey?

ARLINGTON

Ah? You don't know how? Watch me. [*Curtseys.*] So. 1. 2. 3. 4.

[PATRICIA *bursts out laughing.*]

The newest mode. Copy that.

PATRICIA

I'll take it on trust.

ARLINGTON

No, no! Try it with me. [*They curtsey to each other.*]

[*Enter* CHIFFINCH. *He bursts out laughing.*]

CHIFFINCH

My lord!

[PATRICIA *goes up to the* KING'S *picture and practises the curtsey.*]

ARLINGTON

[*With great dignity.*] Mr. Chiffinch!

CHIFFINCH

The King, my Lord, commands you to him.

ARLINGTON

With this lady?

CHIFFINCH

No, not yet. Lord Clarendon and Mr. Pepys are plaguing the King out of his life. Some point has arisen which you can clear up.

[PATRICIA, *practising her curtsey, ends by sitting abruptly on the floor. The two men hurry to pick her up.*]

ARLINGTON

[*To* PATRICIA.] Careful! Careful! There! Practise your curtsey; and practise a smile!

[PATRICIA *smiles ruefully and sits on a stool at the back of the stage.*]

[ARLINGTON *exit.* CHIFFINCH *is just following him, when enter* MONTAGU *hurriedly; he comes down rapidly.*]

MONTAGU

[*To* CHIFFINCH.] You, there! The King has sent for me. Mr. Sidney Montagu.

CHIFFINCH

[*Highly offended.*] I know nothing of you, sir. Wait, wait.

[*Exit.*]

MONTAGU

[*Raging.*] A plague on antechambering and impudent menials.

PATRICIA

[*Where she is sitting.*] So say I just.

MONTAGU

[*Turning sharply.*] I crave your pardon, Madam! I had not seen you.

[PATRICIA *rises, coming down sweeps him a magnificent curtsey.*]

PATRICIA

Was that well done, *Mr. Sidney Montagu?*

MONTAGU

You know my name, Madam? Faith, you have the advantage of me!

PATRICIA

Sure 'tis not the first time.

MONTAGU

Have we met before?

PATRICIA

Have you forgot the inn-yard a sennight since?

MONTAGU

Oh! Were you with the Queen then? In the to-do I must have —

PATRICIA

Overlooked me?

MONTAGU

Why, that is the fact of it, though, indeed, I must have been blind!

PATRICIA

Blind with anger, belike; for so you seemed.

MONTAGU

[*Laughing.*] Faith, I had been made a fool of by an ugly little slip of a girl. If you'll believe me she had come riding in in man's clothes, and, thinking her a man, I had challenged her! The minx!

PATRICIA

[*Laughing.*] Do you challenge every man you see?

MONTAGU

Ay, if I like not his looks.

PATRICIA

[*Imitating herself as a boy.*] Well, Mr. Montagu, when are we to fight that duel?

MONTAGU

We? — Eh? — what! — It wasn't — it can't have been —! Good Gad, was it you?

PATRICIA

[*Bowing like a boy.*] At your service.

MONTAGU

You, the braggadocious, knock-knee'd —

PATRICIA

Ow!

MONTAGU

I mean, you, the boy? No, no! He was a foot taller.

PATRICIA

In boy's clothes.

MONTAGU

Well! May I everlastingly —! Then there is nothing for me, but to withdraw. [*He moves to go.*]

PATRICIA

[*Quickly.*] You are to wait for the King's summons.

MONTAGU

But I have offended you.

PATRICIA

You must not offend the King.

MONTAGU

Well — I — I crave pardon for addressing you! It shall not occur again.

PATRICIA

Very well, sir.

[*A pause* — PATRICIA *breaks into a ripple of laughter.*]

MONTAGU

Did you speak?

PATRICIA

No, sir.

MONTAGU

You laughed?

PATRICIA

I did.

MONTAGU

Why?

PATRICIA

[*Protest.*] Oh!

MONTAGU

Because you've twice made me look a fool?

PATRICIA

Oh, what man doesn't look a fool every other day and none the worse for it!

MONTAGU

Men don't like it.

PATRICIA

[*Insidiously.*] They who can't afford it; but you can.

MONTAGU

How so?

PATRICIA

[*Demurely.*] Sure, with you 'tis exceptional.

MONTAGU

[*Conquered.*] Ah! You've kissed the Blarney-stone.

PATRICIA

Sorrow a kiss. Well? Am I forgiven?

MONTAGU

Forgiven —! But I was not to address you.

PATRICIA

Oh, the mischief's done now, and you may as well go on.

MONTAGU

Well — er,— so now you are with the Queen?

PATRICIA

[*Who had hoped he was going to say something more interesting, stiffly.*] I have that honour.

MONTAGU

[*Looking at her keenly, and speaking very warmly.*] I rejoice! Ah, I rejoice! I thank Heaven!

PATRICIA

[*Amazed.*] 'Tis vastly civil of you, but why do you speak so gravely?

MONTAGU

I feared —

PATRICIA

What did you fear?

MONTAGU

I feared — [*He breaks off.*] Lady Castlemaine seemed much took with you.

PATRICIA

Indeed, she was very gracious —

MONTAGU

Ay; plaguey gracious.

PATRICIA

But I have not seen her since that day.

MONTAGU

[*Relieved.*] That's well. Oh, that's very good hearing!

PATRICIA

You puzzle me, sir; for you, yourself, seemed on the best of terms with that lady.

MONTAGU

I! — um — I have not seen her since that day, neither.

PATRICIA

How strange! Why not?

MONTAGU

[*With a tinge of bitterness and a look at the* KING's *door.*] Oh — she has been better occupied — she has come back to court.

PATRICIA

[*Seriously.*] Ay; and the Queen is vexed. Mr. Montagu, why is the Queen vexed?

MONTAGU

Surely, Mistress — [*He breaks off.*] Why, I don't even know your name.

PATRICIA

Patricia O'Brien, at your service. My father is Lord Belisle.

MONTAGU

[*With a bow.*] Lady Patricia, your very humble servant to command. [*They exchange bows and curtseys.*]

PATRICIA

[*Laughing.*] Oh, that would have pleased Lord Arlington! Why is the Queen vexed at Lady Castlemaine's presence?

MONTAGU

How long have you been at court?

PATRICIA

I believe you're an Irishman, too! You answer in questions. I've been at court a week.

MONTAGU

Then you know very well why the Queen's vexed.

PATRICIA

Sorrow a word.

MONTAGU

[*After a look at her.*] Well, it's not for me to tell you.

PATRICIA

I see you still bear me a grudge. I am sorry, for I need a friend.

MONTAGU

You!

PATRICIA

I. Mr. Montagu, was you ever in a nightmare?

MONTAGU

Ay; for sins of gluttony and wine-bibbing.

PATRICIA

And in your dream did you see faces; tens and hundreds of faces, peering at you and leering at you; till you was chilled with horror; for, though they smiled, they were devil's faces all of 'em?

MONTAGU

Ah —? Is that how Whitehall strikes you?

PATRICIA

No other way.

MONTAGU

Will you let me ask you one question?

PATRICIA

Well?

MONTAGU

I fear 'tis impertinent.

PATRICIA

Sure I'll tell you if it is.

MONTAGU

Then, what are you doing here, alone, in the King's wing o' the palace?

PATRICIA

Kicking my heels and wondering.

MONTAGU

Forgive me if I insist. Why are you here?

PATRICIA

By my truly, I know no more than you. I was sent for.

MONTAGU

By —?

PATRICIA

By the King.

MONTAGU

Who brought the message?

PATRICIA

Lord Arlington.

MONTAGU

[*An exclamation of anger.*] Hah!
[*He strides to and fro excitedly.*]

PATRICIA

Why do you say "Hah"; and why do you take those great strides?

MONTAGU

Do you mean you don't know why you was sent for?

PATRICIA

Divil a bit.

MONTAGU

You can make no guess?

PATRICIA

Divil a guess.

MONTAGU

Well, *I* know.

PATRICIA

[*Eagerly.*] Do you, now? — then tell me quickly.

MONTAGU

[*After a hesitation.*] I can't.

PATRICIA

[*Astonished.*] Why will you make a mystery of it?

MONTAGU

[*Bitterly.*] Oh, 'tis no mystery, save to yourself. Haven't the leerings and peerings put it into your head? Hasn't Lord Arlington put it into your head?

PATRICIA

[*Impatiently.*] Put *what* into my head? Speak plain English, man!

MONTAGU

Do you mean to say you know nothing of King Charles, nothing of Arlington, nothing of Chiffinch, nothing of the Court?

PATRICIA

How will I know anything of 'em? Wasn't I, all my life, at Castle O'Brien, which sounds fine, but is a cowlagh with four walls and half a roof on a rock by the sea, a world away from the world. By the same token, 'twas because I knew nothing, and wanted to know all, I put on boy's clothes, and slipt away with my stocking —

MONTAGU

What!

PATRICIA

— The one with the money in it — and sailed across the channel and bought a horse — you remember the horse? — and rode to London town.

MONTAGU

Will you have my counsel?

PATRICIA

And thank you kindly.

MONTAGU

Get back into your boy's clothes again, and ride back, and sail back, or swim back, to Castle O'Brien; and thank God when you're under the half of a roof again.

PATRICIA

Oh!

MONTAGU

That's my counsel, though 'tis given against my own advantage.

PATRICIA

[*Comes up to him, coaxingly, with her hand on his arm.*] How is it against your advantage?

MONTAGU

[*Avoiding her.*] Never mind that. Perhaps it isn't.

PATRICIA

[*Breaking away.*] I tell you what, Mr. Montagu; you're a vexing person. You talk like everybody else here, with a meaning at the back of your words that

doesn't show through. You're in a mighty hurry to be rid of me, and 'tisn't for your advantage and 'tis for your advantage, and what am I to make of you, at all, at all?

MONTAGU

Are you willing to take my counsel?

PATRICIA

Is it likely?

MONTAGU

You will not?

PATRICIA

Not I! I love the Queen. The Queen, poor soul, seems to love me, and 'tis few enough she has to love in this heretic land.

MONTAGU

[*Eagerly.*] Are you of her faith?

PATRICIA

What else would I be?

MONTAGU

So am I.

PATRICIA

Of course you are.

MONTAGU

And you're going through with this mad adventure?

PATRICIA

I am, so. Why, man, don't you see what a frolic 'tis?

MONTAGU

Frolic! You have no fear?

PATRICIA

Fear, is it? Oh, whirra have I sailed the stormy seas in a nutshell, have I rode unbroken Galway ponies over stone walls, have I been out o' nights on lonely moors when the spirits of the dead wailed around my ears, and will I be afraid of anything in Whitehall?

MONTAGU

[*With admiration.*] Hah! — well — will you let me be your friend, Lady Patricia?

PATRICIA

'Tis what I ask for, and my friends call me Pat.

MONTAGU

Here's my hand, Pat!

PATRICIA

[*Gripping his hand.*] And here's mine, with my heart in it!

MONTAGU

[*Eagerly.*] Your heart —?

[*He half draws her to him.*]

[*Enter* LADY CASTLEMAINE. PATRICIA *and* MONTAGU *separate. From now onwards groups of ladies and gentlemen pass and re-pass along the corridor.*]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Laughing.*] A very pretty picture, Mr. Sidney Montagu! [*She turns to* PATRICIA.] Ah? The boy-girl on the horse of t'other night.

MONTAGU

[*Stiffly.*] Lady Patricia O'Brien —

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*With an exaggerated curtsey.*] Your servant. But I'll not interrupt you. I'm for the King.

[*She crosses towards the* KING'S *door.* CHIFFINCH *appears, barring her way.*]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Make way, Chiffinch.

CHIFFINCH

[*Warding her off.*] His Majesty is in council.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

What of it? Stand aside.

CHIFFINCH

You must be pleased to wait. When the council

rises the King has commanded Lady Patricia to attend him. Forgive me.

[*Exit, closing the door in* CASTLEMAINE'S *face.*]

[CASTLEMAINE *stands nonplussed a moment; then turns to* PATRICIA.]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Insolently.*] You ride fast, young mistress.

PATRICIA

[*Good-naturedly.*] 'Tis the way with Irish maids.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Take care there be no stone in your path.

PATRICIA

Faith, and stone walls can't stop us!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Impertinence! [*To* MONTAGU.] I have not seen you since a week.

[PATRICIA *turns sharply to listen.*]

MONTAGU

[*Very courteously.*] You forbade me your house.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

In a moment of pique. You shall squire me home to-night.

MONTAGU

My time is the King's.

[PATRICIA *is delighted.*]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

I'll tell you what, sir; neither I nor the King loves so solemn a face for our frolics.

MONTAGU

I am not bent on frolic, but on fighting.

PATRICIA

[*Coming down eagerly.*] Fighting —? What? Where?

MONTAGU

Why, the Hollanders mean business.

PATRICIA

War! — Oh, how I envy you!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Mockingly.*] Why, don the breeches again, then, and ride to battle.

PATRICIA

Begob, I wish I could!

[CHIFFINCH *appears.*]

CHIFFINCH

Mr. Sidney Montagu, the King calls for you.

MONTAGU

Lady Patricia, will you not retire?

CHIFFINCH

By no means. His Majesty particularly asked if she was waiting.

PATRICIA

[*To* CHIFFINCH.] Ay; and I take it uncivil of him to keep me waiting so long.

[CASTLEMAINE *crosses to* CHIFFINCH, MONTAGU *goes hurriedly to* PATRICIA.]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*To* CHIFFINCH.] Did you say *I* was here?

MONTAGU

[*To* PATRICIA.] I hate leaving you with her.

CHIFFINCH

[*To* CASTLEMAINE.] I did.

PATRICIA

[*To* MONTAGU.] Why?

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*To* CHIFFINCH.] Well? What did he answer?

MONTAGU

[*To* PATRICIA, *with a look at* CASTLEMAINE.] Oh! I cannot say why.

CHIFFINCH

[*To* CASTLEMAINE.] He did not answer. He shrugged his shoulders. Now, Mr. Montagu.

MONTAGU

[*To him.*] Ay, ay!
[*He whispers to* PATRICIA.] Be on your guard.
[*Exit with* CHIFFINCH.]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Coming to* PATRICIA.] And how is the blackamoor?

PATRICIA

Meaning?

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Oh — your Portugal queen.

PATRICIA

The poor soul suffers — for lack of love.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Foh! How can an ugly little wretch like that expect love?

PATRICIA

[*Coming up to her, and speaking with earnest simplicity.*] When I rode into the inn-yard t'other day, you was sweet and gracious. What have I done to change you?

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Carelessly, avoiding her look.*] Oh, *I* am not changed.

PATRICIA

By my truly you are. I said to myself: It's the lucky girl I am, to have won the favour of so kind and lovely a lady. Why, then, do you now belie your gentle nature, and speak to me as though you was my enemy?

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Looking at her closely.*] Girl — are you jesting?

PATRICIA

[*Almost frightened.*] I know not what you mean.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Either you are the simplest milkmaid that ever drew udder, or the slyest vixen that ever ran to earth.

PATRICIA

[*With dignity.*] Neither of these. I am but a young

girl who fears she may have offended, for she is new to the court.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Bitterly.*] God! how soon the newness will wear off! [*Relaxing; condescending.*] I am not vexed with you, child, or, if I be, 'tis your innocence hath vexed me.

PATRICIA

[*Puzzled.*] I cannot understand that.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*With a mocking laugh.*] Can you not? Well, well; keep your innocence, or the manner of it, as long as you can. 'Tis the finest bait where you are fishing.

PATRICIA

Riddles. You all speak in riddles that seem to hide unpleasing answers.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Oh, you'll find 'em pleasing in time. Fish, my lady Patricia; fish wherever you will, so you fish not in my waters.

PATRICIA

I should thank you for your advice if I knew what language you were talking.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

'Tis plain English, and 'tis not advice, but a command!

PATRICIA

[*Breaking out.*] Oh, hould your whisht, now! Now you've gone too far! For I take no commands, here or anywhere in the wide world, save from the Queen.

[*Enter* BUCKINGHAM *from the back. At the same time a footman, armed with a long pole, to which a lighted taper is fixed, comes and lights the candles in the sconces. A blaze of light.*]

BUCKINGHAM

Babs, by my soul — and Lady Patricia. A fair conjunction. The rising star, and — but let the simile go.

[*To* PATRICIA, *with a low bow.*] Lady Patricia, my very dutiful obeisance.

[PATRICIA *curtseys.*]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*To* PATRICIA, *mockingly.*] If you knew how you are honoured!

PATRICIA

Or, at least, who honoured me.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*To* BUCKINGHAM.] Ho, George, there's a slap in

the face for you! [*As if it were showing him off.*] The cynosure of all observers; the very gem and jewel of Charles's court; the ingenious, the brave, the noble —

BUCKINGHAM

[*Protesting.*] Now Babs, Babs!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

PATRICIA

[*Starting back in horror.*] Oh —!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

O, George, your reputation has gone before you.

BUCKINGHAM

[*To* PATRICIA.] Not to my disadvantage, I trust.

PATRICIA

[*Recovering her self-possession.*] Oh, my Lord, if you are content with your reputation, why should I cavil at it?

[*Enter* MRS. MYDDLETON *with* LORD BRISTOL. *Servants place the card tables about the room.*]

MYDDLETON

[*In conversation with* BRISTOL.] Fie, fie, my lord; these things should be hidden; you are too free.

BRISTOL

But witty. Say I'm witty — wit covers a multitude of shins — [*He waits for her to laugh, but she does not see the joke, which, indeed, is a poor one, and unnecessary from him.*]

No sense of humour. [*He sees* PATRICIA.] Aha! Lady Patricia! Have you rode again lately?

PATRICIA

No, I have not; and I miss it. My Rosinante will be eating his head off; and when next we go out, we'll break each other's neck.

[*Enter* BERKELEY *and* MRS. ROBERTS.]

BERKELEY

Let me perish if you're not the loveliest of women! Let me perish else!

ROBERTS

That's what you say to every woman.

[*Enter* MONTAGU *from the* KING'S *door. He makes straight for* PATRICIA.]

MONTAGU

Still here?

PATRICIA

Where else, since I'm waiting for the King?

MONTAGU

[*With obvious joy.*] Ah! the King will be too late; the Court's assembling.

PATRICIA

Why is it assembling?

MONTAGU

'Tis the card hour, I thank heaven!

PATRICIA

O, fie! Do you thank heaven for gambling?

MONTAGU

No. I thank heaven for my own private thoughts.

PATRICIA

'Tis uncivil not to disclose them.

MONTAGU

[*Passionately.*] Will you give me leave to disclose them? Will you give me leave to include you in them?

PATRICIA

Why should I?

MONTAGU

[*Impulsively.*] Because I love you.

PATRICIA

Whirra! Will you take me by storm?

MONTAGU

You are in great peril. I love you. Give me leave to shield you against the peril.

PATRICIA

I fear no peril, and I see no peril.

MONTAGU

It is here; all around you. It is [*pointing to the* KING'S *door*] there!

PATRICIA

Have you so poor an opinion of me, Mr. Montagu?

MONTAGU

I love you! [*Takes her hand.*]

PATRICIA

Hush!

[BUCKINGHAM *comes to them.* MONTAGU *moves away with a gesture of suppressed anger.*]

BUCKINGHAM

Beware of ensigns, pretty charmer, and their soft nothings.

PATRICIA

His soft nothing was to tell me 'tis the gaming hour. What will that be at all?

BUCKINGHAM

Why, old Rowley —

PATRICIA

Who's old Rowley?

BUCKINGHAM

O, come, come! King Charles, of course. He cannot sleep o' nights, till he have won our money.

PATRICIA

Has he such luck?

BUCKINGHAM

He has such — skill.

PATRICIA

Shall I be seeing the whole court, then?

BUCKINGHAM

Have you not seen it yet?

PATRICIA

How would I see it, when I've been closeted with the Queen all the time?

[BRISTOL *goes to the centre opening, where he meets two lovely young women* (*The* MISSES BROOKE) *and brings them down.*]

MRS. ROBERTS

You must not let yourself be dazzled by the splendour of it, child.

PATRICIA

I'll do my endeavours to remain composed.

[*Lords and Ladies enter, singly and in couples.*]

BERKELEY

[*To* PATRICIA, *pointing to* BRISTOL *and the two* MISSES BROOKE.] Well, my wild Irish Beauty? Two more stones in your path?

PATRICIA

D'ye mean anything?

BERKELEY

Take my meaning or leave my meaning; but Castlemaine isn't beaten yet. Myddleton and Roberts have not hauled down their colours, and here's Bristol has brought his nieces to market! Oh, faith! It's a rough road you've chosen, and somebody will have a bad fall — I say not who. [*He turns away from her.*]

PATRICIA

[*To* MONTAGU.] What are they all after? What's the sense of their talk? The nightmare! Mr. Montagu, the nightmare!

MONTAGU

Let me take you out of it then.

PATRICIA

No! I'll fight my way through.

[*Enter* ARLINGTON *from the* KING'S *door.*]

ARLINGTON

His Majesty will be here presently. [*Looking about him.*] My wife; has any one seen my wife?

ASHLEY

Ask Buckingham.

ARLINGTON

Ah! [*He crosses to* BUCKINGHAM.]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*To* ASHLEY.] Too bad. You'll have them cutting each other's throat.

ASHLEY

Listen.

ARLINGTON

[*To* BUCKINGHAM.] George, Ashley tells me I am to ask you whether you have seen my wife.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Startled.*] Eh? I? — Oh, yes; a while ago.

ARLINGTON

Why is she not here? Was she well when you left her?

BUCKINGHAM

I have never seen her in better health.

ARLINGTON

Thank heaven. Is she not wonderful? Let me tell you something. [*He whispers to* BUCKINGHAM.]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*To* ASHLEY, *laughing.*] There's for your throat-cutting!

MYDDLETON

[*To* PATRICIA.] You must not be alarmed by the great folk you see around you, child.

ROBERTS

[*Patronisingly.*] Though timidity would be natural, to one so new to the company of wits and beauties.

PATRICIA

[*Innocently.*] Which are you? [*They turn away, furious.*]

[*Enter* LADY ARLINGTON. BUCKINGHAM *meets her and leads her in.*]

ARLINGTON

Look! Look! My wife! She comes! The swan-like grace! The sinuous motions! Notice her action! Observe the way she lifts her feet!

PATRICIA

Are you speaking of a horse?

ARLINGTON

I am speaking of my wife.

PATRICIA

Well — how was I to know?

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Your tongue is a little too nimble, child; you are not now in your Irish bogs.

PATRICIA

And I wish I was in so wholesome a place!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Foh! You should thank God for the difference.

PATRICIA

Difference, is it? Oh, whirra, whirra, what for will you be speaking of it at all, at all? To bring the green

fields of Erin before my memory, and the blue seas that come kissing the feet of my father's castle whispering to me: "Pat allannah, come and swim, come and bathe your body in us; come and wash your soul white in us!" And the curlews screamin' round the tower; and the sun and the clouds playin' at catch-as-catch-can on the blue waters! And the wild days on horseback — over stone walls, over ditches and dykes, wid me hair flying in the winds and the salt breath o' the say caressin' me and coaxin' me! Hie, away, Accushla, my little brown pony, you an' me's alone in the world, and never a sorrow or sin to come nigh us! [*To* ARLINGTON, *who tries to interrupt her as he sees the* KING's *door open.*] Och, hould your whisht! If I cannot breathe the air o' my homeland, let me dream myself back to it for the Lord's sake!

[*Enter* KING CHARLES *followed by* PEPYS *and* CHIFFINCH. *There is a stir among the courtiers, but* CHARLES *motions silence, and stands listening to* PATRICIA *as she continues in her rhapsody.*]

Och, the room's heavy with amber and bergamot, and it's monstrous fine you all are, to be sure; but give me the wind on my hills; give me the innocent faces o' the sheep lookin' up at me; give me the smell o' the peat fire, when me and Moyra sit snug roastin' chestnuts; and Father O'Rafferty there wid his fiddle an' all, an' Moyra croonin' her songs. [*She becomes aware of* CHARLES

who is now close to her, staring at her admiringly; she continues in one breath.] Bad manners to you, phwat are you staring at, you jackeen with the dark face and the bowld eyes. O, begob the King! [*She stands petrified.*]

CHARLES

Pray continue —

PATRICIA

[*Bobbing a countrified curtsey.*] Faith, no! My Pegasus takes walls and ditches, but he baulks at a crown.

CHARLES

The greater my loss. I have no luck this evening. I fear I've kept you waiting.

PATRICIA

[*Airily.*] Oh, your Majesty, don't apologise.
[*The courtiers are profoundly shocked.*]

PATRICIA

Lord Arlington kept me amused, and Mr. Montagu kept me interested.

CHARLES

[*Drily.*] That was not what I had you hither for. I wish Arlington and Montagu would amuse *me*. But they've plagued me with dull politics, till my brain is

dancing a fandang with my poor skull. Your rhapsody was a breath of wind blowing the cobwebs away.

PATRICIA

[*Abruptly.*] Will there be war?

ALL

[*Shocked.*] Hush!

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] Ah, young lady, we never ask plain questions, or give plain answers. Odds fish! We're too much alarmed at the thought of hearing the truth! Yet tell her the truth, Mr. Secretary.

PEPYS

Sire, the Dutch will be in the Medway, unless —

PATRICIA

Foreigners in the Medway! Why that's unthinkable!

CHARLES

[*To* Lady Castlemaine.] D'ye see the flash! I vow to Gad we'll make you High Admiral o' the fleet!

PATRICIA

I would to heaven you could!

CHARLES

'Tis the French Maid, Joan of Arc, upon my soul!

ARLINGTON

[*Rubbing his hands.*] He's catching fire!

ROBERTS

The saucy jil-flirt!

BERKELEY

[*To* CASTLEMAINE.] Oh, your poor nose, Babs!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*To him.*] What now, Charles?

BERKELEY

Out of joint again: I heard it snap.

CHARLES

[*Going to his seat at the centre table.*] Well — cards! Lady Arlington — [*To* BUCKINGHAM.] George —

[LADY CASTLEMAINE *moves forward.*]

No, Babs — We must honour the new comer. [*He waves a gracious summons to* PATRICIA.] Lady Patricia —

[LADY CASTLEMAINE *turns away in a fury.*]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

The devil fetch her!

CHARLES

Come. Sit. Sit.

[*All sit.*]

[*Groups are arranged at all the tables.*]

PATRICIA

Cards, is it? But I don't play.

ARLINGTON

[*Shocked.*] Hush! Hush! The King commands.

PATRICIA

It's no use commanding what I can't do.

BUCKINGHAM

The King is waiting.

PATRICIA

By your leave, your Majesty, I know no card games. Choose some one else.

PEPYS

[*To* ASHLEY.] A fine, high-spirited young woman!

CHARLES

This is amazing! Have you never had a card in your hands?

PATRICIA

Oh, faith yes. But only to build castles with.

CHARLES

Castles? —

PATRICIA

Houses of cards; ay. That's proper fun.

CHARLES

Why, let's see you! [*He rises.*] Build one now!

PATRICIA

[*Like a shy child; but eager to begin.*] Shall I?

CHARLES

[*Handing her a pack of cards.*] Go to work.

PATRICIA

Oh, but I must have three packs!

CHARLES

Have thirty! — [*He collects packs from other tables, even where people have begun to play; general movement; those who had sat down rise.*]

BERKELEY

[*At* Lady Castlemaine's *table.*] Ecod! Says she don't play cards, and plays 'em better than the oldest hand!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Who has just had her pack seized by the* KING; *furiously.*] More cards here!

[CHIFFINCH *brings her a fresh pack.*]

CHARLES

[*Throwing the packs he has collected on the table; to* PATRICIA.] There! Is that enough?

PATRICIA

[*Clapping her hands.*] Splendid! I'll build a palace! [*She begins building.*] *

CHARLES

Let me wait on you, fair architect.

PATRICIA

Hand me the cards then!

PEPYS

The King, waiting on his wife's tiring-woman!

BUCKINGHAM

Master Secretary, have you never heard of the wife's maid becoming the master's mistress!

PEPYS

[*Conscience-stricken.*] Hum. Flesh is weak, my Lord.

* Grammont.

PATRICIA

[*To the* KING.] Don't come so close; and don't jog my elbow!

BRISTOL

[*To* LADY CASTLEMAINE.] D'ye hear her?

BUCKINGHAM

[*Who is now the centre of a little group, consisting of* BRISTOL, LADY ARLINGTON, PEPYS *and the two* BROOKES.] Faith — a rhyme! [MONTAGU *listens in the background.*]

An Irish maid on market day
Brought all her goods to court, sir,
She spread 'em out, a fine display,
And that was royal sport, sir.
Rowley, who chanced to wander by,
Caught by the Irish brogue, sir,
And kindled by a flashing eye,
Fell victim to the rogue, sir —

MONTAGU

[*Trembling with rage, but in a suppressed voice.*] I think you are rhyming, my lord?

BUCKINGHAM

I vow to Gad, so I am!

MONTAGU

That is bad for your health.

BUCKINGHAM

Who made you my leech?

LADY ARLINGTON

[*Putting her hand on* BUCKINGHAM'S *arm.*] Not here, George! [*She takes him away.*]

CHARLES

[*To* PATRICIA.] Fair fingers — nimble and white.

PATRICIA

[*Building.*] Don't touch! — I'm ashamed o' the whiteness; 'tis for lack o' the sun. At home they're a wholesome brown.

CHARLES

Fair, whether brown or white!

PATRICIA

Oh, hould your whisht; it's getting difficult.

BUCKINGHAM

[*To* LADY ARLINGTON.] Oh, sweetheart, those hours this afternoon were heaven!

LADY ARLINGTON

Hush! Hush! Forget!

BUCKINGHAM

Forget! Such raptures can never be erased from my memory.

LADY ARLINGTON

Lud! That were a pity, for then your memory would need no refreshing!

BUCKINGHAM

Tormentor! I'll forget at once!

LADY ARLINGTON

[*Coquettishly.*] Nay. Not till to-morrow!

BERKELEY

[*At* LADY CASTLEMAINE'S *table.*] She's building her fortune, Babs.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Mind the game. [*Slamming down a card.*] I trump you, with my King.

ARLINGTON

[*At her table.*] I thought you'd lost your King long ago.

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Think again.

CHARLES

[*Alluding to* PATRICIA'S *castle, which is now lofty.*] It grows apace.

PATRICIA

[*Building.*] I rode to build my fortune; and look! This shall be an image of it! If I build to the top, it shall mean good luck!

CHARLES

The owner of such charms can never have ill luck.

PATRICIA

You put me out. Look! 'Tis nearing the top!

CHARLES

Marvellous, I protest.

PATRICIA

Sit down! [*Pushes him on to a stool*] for now comes the danger.

PEPYS

Ay: the nearer the summit, the greater the peril.

CHARLES

Silence! [*To the Court in general.*] Cease playing — Stop your breath! She's reached the coping!

[*All stop playing and rise except* LADY CASTLEMAINE.]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Slamming down a card.*] You should play that game in the nursery, Charles.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Under his breath.*] 'Twill lead thither in time.

[MONTAGU, *who overhears this, can scarcely control himself.*]

CHARLES

[*Sternly.*] I said silence!

PATRICIA

[*Still building.*] I have built my way up!

[*Placing cards in position.*] This is my dear Queen's love! This is her health, I pray may be restored. Now the two last! [*The* KING *hands her these.*] This is —

LADY CASTLEMAINE

The King's favour?

PATRICIA

Ay, madam; for my love to the Queen! Oh, but they need a light touch, and the utmost caution —

CHARLES

[*Turns to* BUCKINGHAM.] I vow she's crowned it!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Lud, 'tis plaguey hot! [*She fans herself vigorously; down comes* PATRICIA'S *castle.*]

ALL

Oh!

CHARLES

[*Furious.*] Who did that? I say, who did it?

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Languidly.*] Lud, Charles, is it the first time your favour has crumbled at a breath?

CHARLES

[*Striding towards her.*] You —!

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Facing him.*] Well?

PATRICIA

[*Behind table, interposing.*] 'Tis nothing, Sire; and Lady Castlemaine has a right to fan herself, being of a stout habit, poor thing.

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] Odds fish, that's true, too!

[LADY CASTLEMAINE *turns back to her cards in fury.* CHARLES *goes up laughing among the courtiers. General talk.*]

MONTAGU

[*To* PATRICIA.] I thank heaven it ended as it did. Take warning by it.— Pat!

PATRICIA

What warning will it be, raven?

MONTAGU

Not to build in the clouds.

PATRICIA

Where will I build, then?

MONTAGU

Here; in my heart.

CHARLES

[*In a group, consisting of* BUCKINGHAM, BRISTOL *and* BERKELEY.] No, no; I'm in no mood to settle anything but that pestilent woman. [*Indicating* LADY CASTLEMAINE.]

[PATRICIA *sits below the card table and busies herself arranging the fallen cards in packs.*]

BRISTOL

But this is a question of vital consequence.

BERKELEY

And 'tis a question only you can resolve.

CHARLES

Oh, out with it, then.

PEPYS

Thank Heaven they can be serious at need!

BUCKINGHAM

We were hot in a discussion as to which of our reigning Beauties has the shapeliest leg.

[*Cries; little screams from the ladies. Laughter from the men.*]

MONTAGU

[*Horrified.*] Upon my soul —!

ARLINGTON

There can be no manner of doubt on that score; my —

LADY ARLINGTON

[*Severely.*] Sit down, Henry!

BRISTOL

I assure you —

BERKELEY

I know —

ASHLEY

I can convince you —

ARLINGTON

I tell you, in green silk stockings —

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] Silence! [*Quietly.*] On this subject I speak with authority.

BUCKINGHAM

Ay, Gad! I should think so.

CHARLES

The shapeliest legs in this company belong to — [*He looks round at the ladies, who are immediately all in a flutter.*] Belong to — [*His eye falls on* LADY CASTLEMAINE.]

LADY CASTLEMAINE

Spare my blushes, Charles.

CHARLES

[*Seriously, and with a profound bow.*] Belong to Lady Patricia O'Brien.*

[*Dead silence.*]

PATRICIA

[*Looking over her shoulder, says with innocent pleasure.*] Thank you. [*She turns to her cards again.*] [MONTAGU *is fuming.* PEPYS *edges towards him.* LADY CASTLEMAINE *rises.*]

ARLINGTON

In the presence of my wife —

[LADY ARLINGTON *silences him with her fan.*]

BERKELEY

Hush, Arlington: His Majesty no doubt speaks with knowledge.

* Grammont.

MONTAGU

[*Under his breath.*] God — !

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] Honi soit qui mal y pense! *

PEPYS

[*Quietly to* MONTAGU.] Come away, my young friend.

MONTAGU

[*Roughly.*] Let me alone!

CHARLES

[*Enjoying the situation.*] Ay — ay — you're a proper herd of Gadarene swine, to be sure. Smiling and smirking, with evil thoughts in your minds, and an evil glitter in your eyes. I have the honour and privilege of speaking with knowledge, because the Queen brought the Lady Patricia to me first in the guise of a boy.

[PATRICIA *rises and curtseys.*]

[MONTAGU *is enormously relieved. Those who were present in the innyard, when* PATRICIA *rode in, turn to each other as much as to say "Of course; we remember."*]

ARLINGTON

Sire, sire, even so. In the absence of means of comparison I am loyal [*indicating his wife*] to Isabella.

* Grammont.

BUCKINGHAM

So am I! None are so fair as those in green silk stockings! *

ARLINGTON

[*Amazed.*] Eh —? [*He turns to his wife.*] Isabella —?

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] I cannot well ask Lady Patricia to convince you.

[MONTAGU *who was moving towards another group, turns abruptly at the sound of* PATRICIA'S *voice.*]

PATRICIA

Oh! If that's all that's troubling you! Many's the mile I've traipsed through our bogs with my coats to my knees and none the worse for it! —

[*And without more ado she lifts her skirts to her knees. A murmur of admiration.*] *

LADY CASTLEMAINE

[*Indignant.*] The brazen hussy!

[PATRICIA *has let her skirts fall. She finds herself face to face with* MONTAGU, *who is white with fury.*]

PATRICIA

[*Frightened.*] Sidney —!

* Grammont.

MONTAGU

Farewell!

[*He turns his back on her and strides out, leaving her puzzled and astonished. An orchestra strikes up. Groups form for a dance. The* KING *comes and offers* PATRICIA *his hand. She is in deep distress, looking after* MONTAGU. *The Dance begins.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT III

ACT III

[*The Pantiles at Tunbridge wells. On the right is a crescent of two-storied wooden houses, with a wooden colonnade along the front. Under the colonnade are tiny shops such as are found at fashionable resorts: a jeweller's; a milliner's, a pastry cook's, etc.* PATRICIA *lodges over the pastry cook's and her house is distinguished by a balcony, from which steps lead down to the colonnade. A row of trees runs down the centre of the stage. On the left is a shrubbery, in which is one of the fountains at which the Quality take the waters. There a maid is in attendance. There are oil lanterns between the pillars of the colonnade, and circular seats round the trees. It is late afternoon.*

The scene is full of life and animation. All the characters in the play are promenading under the trees, or under the colonnade. Some are in the shops; some are seated under the trees. There are pedlars; a woman selling lavender; an Italian boy with a hurdy-gurdy; another with a peep-show; a girl selling flowers; another with oranges, etc, etc. All are moving about, chattering, laughing, singing.

[LADY ARLINGTON *is brought on in Sedan Chair accompanied by* BUCKINGHAM. *Music on.*]

[ASHLEY *sitting under the first tree, with* MRS. MYDDLETON *and* MRS. ROBERTS, BERKELEY *is talking with the two* MISSES BROOKE; BUCKINGHAM *is with* LADY ARLINGTON. PEPYS *is half out of sight in the shrubbery, showing* MERCER *a sheet of* MS. *music;* MRS. PEPYS *is in the jeweller's shop;* BRISTOL *is drinking at the fountain.*]

ASHLEY

Let me perish, but 'tis rank tyranny to tie us by the leg in this countrified hole.

MYDDLETON

And all because the little Portugal woman must take the waters!

ROBERTS

As if the waters of Tunbridge would heal her.

ASHLEY

'Tis to be hoped she's past that.

BERKELEY

[*Joins the group.*] Come, come, Anthony; what's she done to you?

ASHLEY

Got me here, and keeps me here. Isn't that enough?

BUCKINGHAM

[*Coming up with* LADY ARLINGTON, *and speaking to* the BROOKES.] Put on a merrier face, angels; we're to have an *alfresco* frolic to-night.

MISS HILL BROOKE

As 'twere dancing on the Queen's grave.

LADY ARLINGTON

You give me a gooseflesh! 'Twill be proper sport. I am coming as Diana.

BRISTOL

In green silk stockings?

LADY ARLINGTON

Shall I never hear the last of them?

BRISTOL

Never. Those stockings are now a page of history.

BUCKINGHAM

A footnote. But talking of stockings, has any one seen the fair Patricia?

MISS HILL BROOKE

No one. She's shut herself in her lodging all day.

MISS FRANCES BROOKE

Artful wretch. She's making herself peculiar.

BUCKINGHAM

Dangling the bait out of Rowley's reach, eh?

MYDDLETON

[*Who has joined the group.*] I vow I never saw the King so deeply in love!

MISS HILL BROOKE

Oh, the wickedness of innocence!

ROBERTS

Poor Babs Castlemaine! She goes out of one vapour into another, for mere fury!

BUCKINGHAM

Where does the inaccessible Nymph, Patricia, dwell?

LADY ARLINGTON

[*With jealousy.*] What is that to you, George?

BUCKINGHAM

Nothing: I only asked.

ASHLEY

As a fact, she lodges there. Over the pastry cook's.

LADY ARLINGTON

Let us take the air, George.

BUCKINGHAM

In a moment.

BERKELEY

[*Laughing; to* BUCKINGHAM.] A little clinging, *George?* Ivy, *George?*

BUCKINGHAM

[*With a sigh.*] Ivy? A limpet.

LADY ARLINGTON

[*Calling.*] George!

BUCKINGHAM

Behold me! [*He joins her.*]
[*They go out through the shrubbery.*]

PEPYS

[*Bringing* MERCER *cautiously down from the shrubbery.*] Take this with you, Mercer. Practise it. Learn the words. 'Tis my song. "Beauty Retire." Words by Sir George Davenant. Music by me. [*He hums.*]

Beauty retire, thou dost my pity move;
Believe my pity, and then trust my love.

At first I thought her by a prophet sent
As a reward for valour's toils,
More worth than all my Father's spoils;
But now she is become my punishment.

[MRS. PEPYS *comes out of the jeweller's shop and stands within earshot.*]

MERCER

Lord, 'tis properly sentimental!

PEPYS

[*Holding her chin in his hand.*] Dapper Dicky always was sentimental. We'll run through it to-night, eh? When they're all at the King's frolic. You and I, eh?

MERCER

I am afraid of my mistress.

PEPYS

She'll be safe. Jigging it in Frenchified dances. Odds, bobs, we'll be merry, eh, chuck? [*Chucks her under the chin.*] You and Dapper Dicky, eh?

[MERCER *laughs.*]

MRS. PEPYS

[*Coming down; coldly.*] Mercer.

MERCER

[*Startled.*] La! [*Demurely.*] If you please, ma'am.

MRS. PEPYS

Go home.

MERCER

[*Bobbing a rather mocking curtsey.*] If you please, ma'am.

[MERCER *runs away giggling.*]

PEPYS

[*Weakly.*] Um — shall we to supper, chuck?

MRS. PEPYS

[*Ignoring the question.*] I cannot keep a maid it seems, but you must lead her astray —

PEPYS

Now, woman, I brought you at heavy expense to the Wells for your health. Why will you sour your blood with these humours?

MRS. PEPYS

Why will you be so free with that jil-flirt?

PEPYS

Improving her mind, ma'am; improving her mind.

MRS. PEPYS

Ho! "Dapper Dicky"—!

PEPYS

[*In a rage.*] Now God-a-Mercy!

MRS. PEPYS

"Dapper Dicky!"

PEPYS

By the Lord, I'll pull your nose! *
[ARLINGTON *joins them with* ASHLEY.]

ARLINGTON

[*Coming between them.*] Billing and cooing, Mr. Secretary? [*To* MRS. PEPYS.] Your servant, Madam. Upon my faith, the ideal couple. Like myself and my Isabella. Have you met Isabella?

MRS. PEPYS

[*In spite of* PEPYS's *signals.*] Yes! I saw her wandering into the shrubbery with Lord Buckingham.
[*She moves away with* ASHLEY.]

ARLINGTON

Precious Isabella! Her wit matches Buckingham's so well! They are great friends — great friends. She explained to me how she showed him her stockings.

* Pepys's Diary.

PEPYS

On?

ARLINGTON

Oh, fie! Oh, fie!

ASHLEY

Fair Madam Pepys, have you seen the new hoods at the French milliner's?

MRS. PEPYS

[*With a look at* PEPYS.] La! No.

ASHLEY

Then give me the privilege of showing them to you.

[*He offers his hand, which* MRS. PEPYS *takes: they move off.*]

PEPYS

[*Calling after her.*] Elizabeth —

MRS. PEPYS

[*With bitter irony.*] Dapper Dicky!

[*They go into the milliner's.*]

ARLINGTON

Mr. Secretary —

PEPYS

Pardon, my lord, but —

[PEPYS *moves towards the milliner's shop.*]

ARLINGTON

Mr. Secretary! What news out of Holland?

PEPYS

I am awaiting Mr. Montagu with impatience; from Breda, whither I sent him. [*He turns to go again.*]

[PATRICIA *appears on her balcony.*]

ARLINGTON

Fie, Mr. Pepys! You remove *Uriah,* that David may be unhindered.

[PEPYS *turns.*]

PEPYS

[*Puzzled.*] David? — Uriah?

ARLINGTON

Oh, come, come! In plain Engish: you send young Montagu on a dangerous errand, that Charles may dally unmolested with the wild Irish girl.

PEPYS

You insinuate that I, *I,* would lend myself to such an intrigue —?

ARLINGTON

Not so hot, my friend. Charles is not ungrateful, and it shall redound to your honour!

PEPYS

Honour —! [*Speechless.*] My Lord, if you be such a stickler for honour, I advise you to look in the shrubbery!

ARLINGTON

[*In a huff.*] I think you grow impertinent, sir.

[*He goes towards the shrubbery but changes his mind, and exit.*]

[*Some of the promenaders stroll off.*]

PATRICIA

Mr. Pepys!

PEPYS

[*Looking up, startled.*] Eh? The Lady Patricia!

PATRICIA

Wait till I come down to you!

[*She runs to the end of the balcony, and down the stairs.*]

[*The Town Dinner Bell rings in the distance.* BRISTOL *exclaims "Dinner" and exit. All follow gradually.*]

PEPYS

But — [*He stands irresolute.*]

PATRICIA

[*Coming to him.*] I've been shut up all day. Now

the gadflies have gone to their meal — and 'tis offal they feed on — I can take the air. Are you very hungry?

PEPYS

To be plain with you, I have been put somewhat out of appetite.

PATRICIA

Come and sit ye down, then.

PEPYS

[*With an anxious glance towards the milliner's shop.*] But — my wife —

PATRICIA

Do I frighten you, Mr. Secretary?

PEPYS

Beauty never frightened me yet —

PATRICIA

[*Indicating the seat beside her.*] Well, then —

PEPYS

— and does not frighten me now.

[*He sits beside her with an insinuating air, and is about to put a protecting arm round her.*]

PATRICIA

You're not to make love to me.

[*He takes his arm away, crushed.*]
I want news.

PEPYS

Of what, cruel nymph?

PATRICIA

[*Carelessly.*] Oh — *any* news. But mainly of the Dutch.

PEPYS

I am waiting to hear.

PATRICIA

From whom?

PEPYS

Young Montagu is to tell me.

PATRICIA

[*Indifferently.*] Oh, indeed? Is he your spy?

PEPYS

No, no, no! He's gone openly, being master of their tongue.

PATRICIA

Not a dangerous errand then?

PEPYS

Very — if he was not discreet.

PATRICIA

You think him discreet?

PEPYS

I should not have sent him else.

PATRICIA

And brave?

PEPYS

A fine young fellow. A fine, discreet, brave, young fellow.

PATRICIA

But hot-tempered?

PEPYS

No more than becomes a gentleman.

PATRICIA

And swift to take offence?

PEPYS

Not without cause.

PATRICIA

Oh? Do you say I gave him cause?

PEPYS

[*Laughing.*] Ah! You've led me into a trap!

PATRICIA

But do you?

PEPYS

Must I answer?

PATRICIA

You must.

PEPYS

Why, then, yes, I do.

PATRICIA

Because I showed my ankles?

PEPYS

[*Ticking the points off on his fingers.*] We are to consider where you showed 'em; whom you showed 'em to; how much of 'em you showed; and the feelings towards you of all the spectators — including our young friend.

PATRICIA

When do you expect him back?

PEPYS

I am awaiting him impatiently.

PATRICIA

[*Alarmed.*] Here?

PEPYS

Of course.

PATRICIA

Thank you. Then *I* must be gone. [*She rises.*]

PEPYS

Well, I'm sending Madam Pepys to London to-morrow. She'll be company for you.

PATRICIA

You're in a monstrous hurry to be rid of me.

PEPYS

I thought you were in a monstrous hurry to go.

PATRICIA

[*Sitting.*] Mr. Pepys, I think you're a — I think you're — [*She breaks down, sobbing with her head on his shoulder.*]

PEPYS

There, now; there now!

[*He puts his arm round her.*]

[*Enter* MRS. PEPYS *from the milliner's with* ASHLEY *who gives her a hat box and points to* PEPYS *and* PATRICIA.]

MRS. PEPYS

[*Severely.*] Samuel!

PEPYS

[*Rises.*] O Lord! In the wrong again!

[*He joins his wife, and they go out, leaving* ASHLEY. *Enter* FATHER O'RAFFERTY, *on a very small donkey, led by a boy. He dismounts. The shop people begin to put up their shutters. And having done so, they lock the shop doors and go off.*]

ASHLEY

[*Staring at* FATHER O'RAFFERTY.] Split me! what in the world is this?

[PATRICIA *looks up.*]

O'RAFFERTY

[*To the donkey boy.*] Don't bate the faithful baste.

PATRICIA

[*Rushing to him.*] O, Father O'Rafferty, darlin'!

[*She crosses herself and curtseys.*]

O'RAFFERTY

[*Dismounting and not recognising her in her grand clothes.*] My humble duty, Madam.

ASHLEY

Now, my good fellow, make room for your betters!

PATRICIA

[*To* ASHLEY, *pushing him away.*] Och! stand out o' my way; and where will ye find the betters of him? [*To* O'RAFFERTY.] Father alannah!

O'RAFFERTY

[*Overjoyed.*] 'Tis the Lady Patricia! 'Tis Patrick! 'Tis my own Pat!

PATRICIA

[*Seizing his hand.*] Come away with you.

ASHLEY

A pathetic meeting, stap me! The prodigal daughter, and the swine.

PATRICIA

[*To him, fiercely.*] Ha'n't you gone, yet?

ASHLEY

Don't forget the King's frolic?
[*Exit through the shrubbery.*]

PATRICIA

[*Dragging at* O'RAFFERTY.] Come, come.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Alluding to the donkey boy.*] I must discharge my debt.

PATRICIA

[*Giving the boy a coin.*] Oh, here! Run away, and take Pegasus with you.

[*Exeunt* Boy *and* Donkey.]

O'RAFFERTY

A guinea! Monstrous!

PATRICIA

'Tis worth a thousand to see your face again.

O'RAFFERTY

Let me look at you. I haven't gathered my wits yet.

PATRICIA

Here I am, Father aroon.

O'RAFFERTY

A fine lady; a fine court-lady, by the powers!

PATRICIA

Thanks to your teaching, Father.

O'RAFFERTY

It's the proud man I should be.

PATRICIA

It's the proud man you are.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Pensively.*] Ay — ay — If you are happy.

PATRICIA

Why for should I not be happy? [*She sits under the tree.*]

O'RAFFERTY

That's what I'm asking. I'm after having a talk with the Queen's barber; him that I knew in Portugal; and he hath told me much news.

PATRICIA

Of me?

O'RAFFERTY

Mostly.

PATRICIA

And what had he to say of me?

O'RAFFERTY

Many things I like, and some I mislike.

PATRICIA

[*Coaxingly.*] Tell me the things you like.

O'RAFFERTY

I've told you those often.

PATRICIA

The others, then.

O'RAFFERTY

No. *You* shall tell me those.

[CHIFFINCH *is seen coming along the Pantiles.*]

PATRICIA

What's the matter with you, Father?

O'RAFFERTY

Doubt. [*He sits beside her.*]

PATRICIA

[*Looking at him searchingly.*] Oh? I see the Queen's barber has been busy. Ask me questions boldly. Be a man.

O'RAFFERTY

Ay — but you're a woman, and how will you answer?

PATRICIA

Have I ever told you a lie?

O'RAFFERTY

You had never been to court.

PATRICIA

Ask what you will and I'll answer the plain truth.

O'RAFFERTY

You are suddenly rich.

[CHIFFINCH *goes into the pastrycook's shop.*]

PATRICIA

Why do you say so?

O'RAFFERTY

Paupers don't give guineas to donkey boys. Paupers don't come to the Wells.

PATRICIA

The King pays for my lodging.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Pointing to her pearls.*] Paupers don't wear pearls.

PATRICIA

The King gave me those.

O'RAFFERTY

And a fine golden watch.

PATRICIA

And the King gave me that.

O'RAFFERTY

And silks and satins like a duchess.

PATRICIA

The King —

O'RAFFERTY

[*Rises in great distress.*] God forgive me, I wish you'd a' lied!

[CHIFFINCH *comes from the pastrycook's shop towards* PATRICIA.]

PATRICIA

What's gone wrong with your conscience, Padre, that you cannot bear the truth?

O'RAFFERTY

My conscience is it? 'Tis *your* conscience I would examine.

PATRICIA

[*Rises and faces him.*] See it in my eyes, Padre.

O'RAFFERTY

Tell me this one thing: does King Charles ask nothing in return for his gifts?

PATRICIA

Ay. Service to the Queen.

O'RAFFERTY

But for himself?

[*Pause.*]

Ah! you are silent.

PATRICIA

[*Proudly.*] He may ask; and I may refuse.

[CHIFFINCH *has come close. As he speaks* PATRICIA *is startled, and* O'RAFFERTY'S *worst suspicions are confirmed.*]

CHIFFINCH

The King sends me. I am in luck to have found you. His Majesty bids you stay in your lodging. His Majesty will honour you with a visit.

PATRICIA

[*Recovering herself.*] His Majesty must be content with the shelter of this tree, then, for my lodging is not fit to receive him.

CHIFFINCH

Now, dear lady, *can* I take him that message?

[O'RAFFERTY *is deeply distressed.*]

PATRICIA

Since you could bring me his, I doubt whether any message is beyond you.

CHIFFINCH

Well — Charles is good-natured — and —

[*He attempts to touch her arm.*]

PATRICIA

[*Avoiding him.*] I wish you good evening.

CHIFFINCH

Eh? [*Sees there is nothing more to be said.*] Your very humble servant.

[*Exit.*]

[*A pause.*]

O'RAFFERTY

[*Sinks on the seat and buries his face in his hands; then he looks up.*] Oh, Pat, Pat, you're fencing with me. You've told me the truth; but have you told me all the truth? It's no avail tossing your head, and wishing you was rid of the tiresome ould priest, who's come among your grand friends, mud-splashed, and with shiny knees. My knees are shiny because I've worn them out praying the Holy Virgin to watch over you; and I'm mud-splashed because I've rode a long way; for "Go and shield her," said my love; "Go and save her," said my heart; and here I am, and you'll not turn a deaf ear to me, who love you as if you was my own child.

PATRICIA

[*Throwing herself on her knees to him.*] Oh, 'tis better than a hundred fathers you've been to me.

[*She takes his hands.*]

Tell me what 'tis you want I should do.

O'RAFFERTY

I've come, after all, to put the fledgling back into the house-martin's nest. I've come to fetch you home.

PATRICIA

So suddenly? I cannot come.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Sternly.*] Why not? What's in the way?

PATRICIA

Oh, Father, we're at cross purposes; and I cannot tell you more, for, alas, there's nothing to tell. But indeed I cannot come at once; I love —

[O'RAFFERTY *starts back.*]

I love the Queen too well.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Eagerly.*] Aha! *Do* you love her?

PATRICIA

With all my heart; and sorrow for her; and pity her.

[*Four Halberdiers enter and stand at the back.*]

O'RAFFERTY

[*Delighted.*] Now that's good hearing! Oh, that's good hearing.

PATRICIA

[*Astonished at his delight.*] How could I not love her? The sweet soul — and she belike on her death-bed.

[CHIFFINCH *enters.*]

O'RAFFERTY

[*Speaking more to himself than to her.*] Ay: and it's to my friend the Portugal leech I'll talk no later than directly —

[*The* KING *enters accompanied by a few courtiers.*]

PATRICIA

What about?

O'RAFFERTY

Eh? Was I speaking?

PATRICIA

What will you talk to the Queen's leech about?

O'RAFFERTY

Why, the Queen's health, to be sure. Ay! and the Queen's happiness, too.

CHIFFINCH

[*To* PATRICIA.] Lady Patricia — the King. [*He retires.*]

O'RAFFERTY

The King? [*To* PATRICIA.] What, the black-avised gentleman?

PATRICIA

Ay; with the handsome face.

O'RAFFERTY

Come, then, child.

PATRICIA

I must not stir now.

O'RAFFERTY

Then I stay with you.

CHARLES

[*Coming to* PATRICIA.] At confession, child?

PATRICIA

[*With a curtsey.*] More like refusing to confess.

CHARLES

[*To the Courtiers.*] We thank you.

[*The Courtiers look back laughing, bow and exeunt, with* CHIFFINCH.]

Come and sit beside me. [*He sits under the tree.*]

PATRICIA

You have just dismissed us, Sire.

CHARLES

[*With a look at* O'RAFFERTY, *who is bravely holding his ground.*] All but you.

PATRICIA

The Queen awaits me.

CHARLES

The Queen, as you know very well, is in her evening bath. [*To* O'RAFFERTY.] Did you not hear me, sir?

O'RAFFERTY

[*Horribly frightened.*] Has — has your Majesty addressed me?

CHARLES

I thanked you.

O'RAFFERTY

Your Majesty is most gracious.

CHARLES

Odds Fish, take care I become not ungracious.

PATRICIA

[*Laughing.*] No, no, Sire! You must not bark at Father O'Rafferty; he is the best friend I have in the world.

CHARLES

[*To* O'Rafferty.] That's a title others covet, Father —

O'RAFFERTY

O'Rafferty. A poor parish priest.

CHARLES

[*To* Patricia.] So you love your best friend?

PATRICIA

In truly and that I do.

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] In truly and I will be *his* best friend, then. [*To* O'Rafferty, *very courteously.*] What I wished to convey was, that I will not keep you from better company — Mr. Dean —

O'RAFFERTY

[*Not grasping the situation.*] No, no, a poor parish —

CHARLES

'Tis not in my gift; but the Queen is of your faith; go to her, Mr. Dean; tell her what I say, and she'll see it done, Mr. Dean.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Unwilling to go.*] But, Sire —

CHARLES

Enough!

O'RAFFERTY

Yet I would thank your Majesty.

CHARLES

Thank the Queen.

O'RAFFERTY

Ay, the Queen! — whom Pat loves! — I humbly take my leave —

[*He goes to the* KING *as if to shake hands,* PATRICIA *stops him; he withdraws humbly. The* KING *graciously offers him his hand.*]

— to thank the Queen.

[*He goes up the road with* PATRICIA.]

Did ye see that, Pat? The King! He took me by the hand!

[*Exit.*]

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] Odds bobs! A whimsical customer. [*To* PATRICIA.] Sit. Sit.

PATRICIA

[*Standing.*] 'Twere ill manners.

CHARLES

I command!

PATRICIA

Oh, Sire! That's no manners at all.

CHARLES

[*Rises.*] The King entreats.

PATRICIA

[*Sitting resignedly.*] Oh, well! There, then.

[CHARLES *sits beside her; looks at her earnestly and heaves a tremendous sigh.*]

[PATRICIA *imitates him, and then breaks into merry laughter.*]

CHARLES

So you love that shabby old priest?

PATRICIA

Heartily.

CHARLES

And the Queen?

PATRICIA

Devoutly.

CHARLES

And whom else?

PATRICIA

There's Moyra, my nurse.

CHARLES

Whom else?

PATRICIA

Why, that's three; and three's enough.

CHARLES

But the sum of all these loves is mere affection. Come, now; whom do you *love?*

PATRICIA

[*Demurely.*] My father confessor has just left me.

CHARLES

Then you shall be my mother-confessor, and I'll make a clean breast of it; for I vow I love you.

PATRICIA

Alas, poor sinner, for that there's no absolution.

CHARLES

Truly; for I shall never repent on't.

PATRICIA

But soon forget it.

CHARLES

Nor that, either.

PATRICIA

Do you load your memory with all your loves?

CHARLES

By my truly, I think you'll drive me mad.

PATRICIA

By my truly, I think you're mad already.

CHARLES

Why? What symptoms have I shown?

PATRICIA

Foh! 'Tis the act of an accomplished madman to talk of love to a maid, when he has none to give, and she would not take it, if he had.

CHARLES

Why would she not take it, if you please?

PATRICIA

If you please, because 'tis common property.

CHARLES

Take care! 'Tis perilously near high treason to speak so of your king.

PATRICIA

Only the King hears me.

CHARLES

Come now; no need to flash at me so. The girl who rode alone from God knows where; the girl who only t'other day set the whole court blushing —

PATRICIA

[*Indignant.*] Stop! The court blushed for its own evil thought; not for mine!

CHARLES

Well, it blushed; and to make my court blush was an achievement. I say, the girl who did all this, is no such paragon of crop-eared virtue.

PATRICIA

[*Rising.*] And therefore no company for a King.

CHARLES

[*Holding her.*] Wait! wait! You cannot go till the King dismisses you.

PATRICIA

I can be silent while he holds me.

CHARLES

Be silent, then, and listen. Why, if you be so strict, have you made me love you? [PATRICIA *makes a movement of protest.*] I'll answer for you. You'll say you have done no such thing. To which I reply, you have.

You've filched my love. [PATRICIA *starts.*] Ay! If not actively, then passively, by your mere existence. You are merry, and I love mirth; brave, and I love courage; beautiful, and I love beauty. But you have actively encouraged my love.

[*She starts again indignantly.*]

You are not to speak!

[*She gives a gasp of impatience.*]

You have been good to the Queen,

[*He takes her hand.*]

and Heaven knows I wish her well — now she's to be so short a time with me. You've been good to me too: laughed at my jests; not turned away prudishly when I gazed at you; condescended to accept my gifts. [*At this a look of horror crosses* PATRICIA's *face.*] A poor King values such kindness when 'tis offered for no selfish reason. Now you may speak.

PATRICIA

[*Breaking away from him.*] If you was any other man — I'd slap your face.

CHARLES

Slap it, and welcome.

PATRICIA

For you make me angry, and you make me laugh, all in the same breath.

CHARLES

Laugh, my dear; 'tis the more wholesome.

PATRICIA

Have you ever spoke plain sense?

CHARLES

Always

PATRICIA

Or heard it spoke?

CHARLES

Never.

PATRICIA

There, now! Now let's sit cosy and friendly, and you shall take off your crown.

CHARLES

And lay it at your feet.

PATRICIA

And I'll put aside my armour of maidenly reserve.

CHARLES

That's what I've been urging you to do.

PATRICIA

There! 'Tis gone. [*She sits.*] Now you're plain Charles, and I plain Pat.

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] A Maiden did a Shepherd spy —

PATRICIA

With all his lambs around him —

CHARLES

He saw Dan Cupid in her eye —

PATRICIA

And left him where he found him.

CHARLES

[*Laughing.*] No, no! It doesn't go that way.

PATRICIA

That's the way it goes, and we could jingle so till supper and get no further. Now, plainly, what is't you want?

CHARLES

I thought I had put it plainly.

PATRICIA

You want me to be your mistress?

CHARLES

I did not put it so plainly as that.

PATRICIA

Is that the sense of it?

CHARLES

That's the romance of it.

PATRICIA

Oh, what becomes of poor romance? Think of Lady Castlemaine.

CHARLES

Ay! Think of whence she started and to what heights she's risen! Haven't I loaded her with wealth? Haven't I made her daughter a duchess? And see what I've made of her husband!

PATRICIA

[*Looking him full in the face.*] Wonderful! Wonderful! He truly does not see the irony of it!

[*As* CHARLES *is about to speak.*]

Hold your whisht, now; for whenever you speak you make matters worse.

CHARLES

[*Humbly; imitating her.*] I hould my whisht.

PATRICIA

I'm not going to preach at you, so don't yawn yet. You say you think well of me.

CHARLES

I say I love you.

PATRICIA

But what would you say if I was any other man's mistress?

CHARLES

I should say he was a damned lucky dog; and I should cut off his head.

PATRICIA

[*Laughing.*] Deed and truth, you're almost past talking to, and that's a fact. Put the case a young man came to court to seek his fortune. Would you shower honours upon him, if he had no honour of his own? But you ask me to barter my honour for honours.

CHARLES

Oh!

PATRICIA

I won't do it, and you won't ask me to. I respect myself, Charles, and I like you well enough to want you to respect me.

CHARLES

I do! by my faith I do!

PATRICIA

Oh, Charles, Charles, how can the King respect the King's mistress?

CHARLES

Pat, the more you fight me, the more you set me on fire. I vow 'tis a new feeling takes hold of me. I don't know myself. Od rot it, Pat, I'm a gentleman, and you're the first lady I've ever met — save the Queen; and she, poor soul, doesn't count. I love you truly, and as you should be loved. I cannot let you go. I will not let you go.

[*He takes her hand.*]

PATRICIA

Yet, I'm going.

CHARLES

No, no. Listen. Kings have married their subjects ere now; Kings of England. Why! I dare say you are of older ancestry than I.

PATRICIA

[*Flashing at him.*] I should hope so! Why, the O'Briens of Castle O'Brien —!

CHARLES

Well, what do you think of that now? [*Rises.*] Queen of England, eh? it sounds well! Eh?

PATRICIA

[*As in a dream.*] Queen of England —!

CHARLES

Queen Patricia of England! — Ods fish! how the Irish would love me! *

[PATRICIA *sees* THE QUEEN *approaching.*]

PATRICIA

But you have forgotten —

CHARLES

[*Eagerly.*] What? What?

PATRICIA

[*Pointing.*] Queen Catherine of Braganza.

[*Enter* THE QUEEN, *reclining in a chair on wheels, which is pushed by a footman. She is followed by two old Portuguese ladies of forbidding aspect. At her side walks her medical man, and with him* FATHER O'RAFFERTY, *Portuguese Lords, a Priest, etc.*]

CHARLES

Here? — What the plague? — What brings her all this way round?

[PATRICIA *goes to* THE QUEEN *and kisses her hand.*]

THE QUEEN

Ah! this good child! It is your father confessor, 'e tell me I shall find the King 'ere.

* Grammont.

CHARLES

[*Vexed, to* O'Rafferty.] Oho! that's how you seek preferment, is it, my little — parish priest?

THE QUEEN

No, Charles; not parish priest. 'E say you want me to 'ave 'im made a Dean.

CHARLES

Oh, there's no such haste.

THE QUEEN

Oh, but there is. I am so 'appy that you ask something of me, Charles; and for this dear child, too, 'oom I love.

CHARLES

I don't ask it, Kate; I say there's no haste. I must know more of the man. Plague on't, I don't even know his name!

PATRICIA

Oh, yes, your Majesty; I told you: O'Rafferty.

CHARLES

O'Rafferty! 'Tis a name for a ballad. How can a man be a Dean, with such a name? Dean O'Rafferty! Foh!

PATRICIA

Why, make him a Bishop, then, and he'll lose his name.

THE QUEEN

[*Laughing.*] The dear Pat! She is always ready. [*To* O'RAFFERTY.] You 'ave the Queen's word, sir; and I think it shall be Bishop.

O'RAFFERTY

[*Overwhelmed and speechless.*] Madam —

THE QUEEN

[*To him, motioning him to retire.*] You shall wait for my sweet Patricia. [*To her ladies.*] *Appartase um pouco se faz favor.*

[*The attendants and* O'RAFFERTY *retire.* PATRICIA *accompanies* O'RAFFERTY *a little way.*]

Charles, have I pleased you?

CHARLES

[*Comes to her.*] You never could do otherwise; but there was no such haste.

THE QUEEN

[*With a sad smile.*] There is always 'aste to do a little good.

CHARLES

You have done nothing else since you have been here.

THE QUEEN

So very little. Come close, Patricia. Are you 'appy for your confessor?

PATRICIA

So happy; and so grateful.

THE QUEEN

Now, while Charles is in a good 'umour, we must occupy ourselves with you.

PATRICIA

Me, Madam —?

THE QUEEN

'Ave I not 'eard of a Montagu?

[CHARLES *becomes all ear.*]

PATRICIA

[*Confused.*] Nay, I beseech you —!

CHARLES

Do you mean young Sidney Montagu, Kate?

THE QUEEN

I think 'is name is Sidney, eh, Patricia?

CHARLES

Odds fish, Miss Touch-me-not, blows the wind in that quarter?

PATRICIA

[*Recovering, but with flaming cheeks.*] 'Tis an ill wind, then, and blows neither of us any good! for the first time we met, he nearly spitted me on his sword; and the next I angered him so, that he left the court forever!

CHARLES

Ay! I remember. He could not stomach a jest. Oh! A crop-eared ranter.

PATRICIA

[*Indignant.*] No such thing, Sire; but a very brave gentleman.

CHARLES

[*Leading her on.*] Aha? No faults in him?

PATRICIA

For that, a thousand, no doubt [*with a look at the* KING] as in all of us.

THE QUEEN

But with a good 'eart under all.

PATRICIA

[*With spirit.*] I know nought of his heart, Madam.

THE QUEEN

We will find out 'is 'eart. I must see you 'appy before I die.

CHARLES

[*To* THE QUEEN.] Will you suffer me to have one word with this — with Lady Patricia? [*He takes* PATRICIA *by the hand a little apart.*] Wretch! Thou art deep as a well.

PATRICIA

Nay, but as clear.

CHARLES

Tell me truly! Do you love this Montagu?

PATRICIA

Oh, leave that be. Speak to the Queen. Speak kindly to her. Don't you see she's dying for love of you?

CHARLES

Pat! I vow to Gad, if you stay at court, I believe I shall turn Saint! [*To* THE QUEEN.] You've hit it, Kate. Odds fish, we shall have a wedding at court. Your new Bishop shall join their hands.

THE QUEEN

[*Holding out her hand to* PATRICIA, *who kneels and takes it and kisses it.*] I am glad.

PATRICIA

[*Holding* THE QUEEN'S *hand; to* CHARLES.] Now if you condescend to give me *your* hand, Sire —

CHARLES

Ay, willingly; [*Laughing a little ruefully.*] but I'll not say I'm glad, till I see how you agree together.

PATRICIA

[*Gently putting* The Queen's *hand in* The King's.] We shall have your example, Sire. [*Rises.*]

[Charles *and* The Queen *are momentarily thrilled each in their own way, by the touch of their hands.* Patricia *moves away a little.*]

THE QUEEN

[*Clinging to* Charles's *hand; wistfully.*] I would I could be as merry as you, *meu amor.* But I am far from my 'ome, Charles. I 'ave been a poor, sickly thing, unworthy to keep your love. And now, per'aps I am dying. But God knows I loved you truly; and I willingly leave all in the world but you.

CHARLES

[*Deeply moved.*] I protest, I honour you; I love you; and I will do my endeavours to be a better husband to you. [*Kisses her hand.*] *

PATRICIA

[*Who is very near weeping; gaily.*] And with that, in with you, sweet lady; for there is a nip of October in

* Agnes Strickland.

the air. Yet, Madam [*shyly*] will you condescend to me?

THE QUEEN

'Ow, sweet child?

PATRICIA

[*On her knees.*] Will you kiss me?

THE QUEEN

O gladly. 'Old me up, Charles. [CHARLES *puts his arm round her; she looks yearningly into his face.*] Ah, 'usband, the comfort of your arm about me! [*To* PATRICIA *with a gesture of blessing.*] *A santissima virgem vos guarda minha cara!* I love you very dearly. [*She takes* PATRICIA'S *hand between her hands and kisses her long and tenderly on both cheeks; then, as she is taken out.*] Charles, if you 'old me thus, I think I shall soon be a well woman.

[*The* FOOTMAN *wheels her out;* CHARLES *goes with her, still holding her in his arm. All follow except* O'RAFFERTY *and* PATRICIA. *The latter remains on her knees.*]

O'RAFFERTY

[*Struggling with his emotion.*] Pat—

PATRICIA

Don't speak to me!

O'RAFFERTY

[*Humbly.*] I'll wait.

PATRICIA

And don't stand there like a wax image. Call Hafiz.

O'RAFFERTY

What's that at all?

PATRICIA

Oh, clap your hands and you'll see.

[*She is taking off her jewellery, her watch, bracelets, etc. and putting all in her pocket-handkerchief which she has spread on the ground.* O'RAFFERTY *obediently claps his hands, and at once a black page in an oriental dress runs down the stairs from* PATRICIA'S *lodging, and comes to her. He stands grinning with gleaming teeth.*]

O'RAFFERTY

What are you doing, Pat?

PATRICIA

[*On her knees.*] Tearing down my house of cards, Padre — Ah, you don't know. [*To* HAFIZ.] Now, you ebony iniquity, can you understand? [HAFIZ *nods a delighted "Yes."*] Take this handkerchief to the King's lodging. Say you come from Patricia O'Brien. Then they'll lead you to the King. Are you frightened?

[HAFIZ *only grins.*] Hand this handkerchief to the King himself. Have you understood? [HAFIZ *grins and moves away.*] Wait. Here's ten guineas for yourself. And Mistress Brooke is looking for just such a monkey. Go to her.

[HAFIZ *salaams and runs off at the back.*]

O'RAFFERTY

What is this play-acting, Pat?

PATRICIA

[*Rising and giving him a handful of gold.*] And here's for your poor.

O'RAFFERTY

You're stripping yourself.

PATRICIA

Sure: that, too, presently. Ha! Now I can breathe. It's all gone, Father: money, and jewels, and preferment, and — love.

O'RAFFERTY

Child, child, what are you concealing from me?

PATRICIA

A sorrow, but no sin; I'm not bound to confess my sorrow, and a ride will shake it out o' me. Go hire a pair of hackneys, Father. [*At a movement from him.*]

Oh, I've money of my own upstairs; the stocking was a long one.

O'RAFFERTY

What are you going to do?

PATRICIA

We're both going to ride away to-night. Away, away, till we come to the sea; and then we're going to sail — to Castle O'Brien.

O'RAFFERTY

Glory be to God!

PATRICIA

[*Almost hysterical.*] Oh, 'twill be a fine ride and a gay sailing. I'll be the good company for you, and we'll talk of tragic Queens and merry Kings, and proud and stony-hearted lovers. And when we do come to the grey old castle, Moyra will greet us, and we'll sit by the fire, and you shall play your fiddle to us — but I shall not dance; I shall never dance again!

O'RAFFERTY

Till you dance at your wedding, acushla.

[*Exit through the shrubbery. A lamplighter comes and lights the lamps in the colonnade. Enter excitedly* BRISTOL, BERKELEY, ASHLEY, MRS. MYDDLETON, MRS.

ROBERTS *and the two* MISSES BROOKE. *They come in from different directions.*]

[CASTLEMAINE *is brought on in a sedan.*]

BERKELEY

Have you heard the news?

BRISTOL

[*At the same time.*] Have you heard the news?

[*Other courtiers come on.*]

MYDDLETON

Poor Castlemaine! Oh, poor Babs!

ROBERTS

Where will she go?

MISS HILL BROOKE

Well, I, for one, was never fond of her.

MYDDLETON

She was a false friend, and I hate a false friend.

MISS FRANCES BROOKE

An upstart.

[*Enter* BUCKINGHAM *with* LADY ARLINGTON, *from the shrubbery.*]

BUCKINGHAM

What, my sparks, not arrayed for the frolic?

ROBERTS

How did she bear her disgrace?

MISS HILL BROOKE

[*To* BUCKINGHAM.] George, *you* know. Tell us all.

ALL

[*Crowding round him.*] Tell us! Tell us!

BUCKINGHAM

My good souls, what in the world are you talking about?

BERKELEY

By the living Moses, he doesn't know!

ROBERTS

The Castlemaine —!

ALL

Is dismissed!

BUCKINGHAM

What? One at a time!

BERKELEY

The King has sent Castlemaine to Coventry —

MYDDLETON

Or Jericho —

BRISTOL

Or Bath!

MISS HILL BROOKE

And the Queen's so happy, she's taken a turn for the better.

ROBERTS

I'd give a fortune to see the Castlemaine's face!

[LADY CASTLEMAINE *has come among them unperceived.*]

CASTLEMAINE

Here it is.

[*Dead pause. Everybody is nonplussed.*]

BRISTOL

Hum —'tis time we were sped. [*He moves to go.*]

ROBERTS

I'm with you.

CASTLEMAINE

No! You were concerned about my face. What do you say about it?

BUCKINGHAM

[*Cheerily.*] Why, Babs, we say you put a good face on bad news! But 'tis nought. Rowley has a fit o' the

spleen. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. He'll soon tire of the sick Queen again.

[*Enter* ARLINGTON.]

CASTLEMAINE

And what has the Queen to do with it?

BERKELEY

Why, some say her black love-locks have snared him again.

ALL

Arlington!

ARLINGTON

You're out! You're all out! 'Tis the Lady Patricia has fished him and caught him. I know the whole story from Chiffinch. The bargain was struck on this very spot, not half an hour ago.

BUCKINGHAM

Unhappy Babs, your little hour is run!
The waning moon fades in the rising sun.

CASTLEMAINE

Do you think I'll cede to this bog-trotting upstart so easily? Come hither and watch.

[*She rises and goes towards* PATRICIA'S *lodging; the others follow her.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*To* BERKELEY.] This beats cockfighting!

[*Enter* PEPYS *and* SIDNEY MONTAGU.]

PEPYS

You have done well, my young friend; and I shall report highly of you to the King.

MONTAGU

Oh, let be, Master Secretary. I care nothing for rewards.

CASTLEMAINE

[*To* BUCKINGHAM.] Throw a pebble at her window.

MONTAGU

[*Continuing, throwing his cloak on the seat under the tree.*] If you wish to do me a service, send me on a more perilous and more distant errand.

ALL

[*As* BUCKINGHAM *throws a pebble.*] Missed!

MONTAGU

[*Continuing.*] Something wherein my life may be in jeopardy.

PEPYS

Fie, sir, what wicked talk is this?

ARLINGTON

[*Coming down to* MONTAGU.] Ah, Ensign! You've come at the right moment.

[BRISTOL *comes down.*]

You shall foot it to-night! Sir, you shall behold my wife at her best. There is to be a *bal champêtre,* in honour of —

BRISTOL

Discretion, Arlington.

MONTAGU

I am in no humour for prancings, my lord.

[BUCKINGHAM *has thrown another pebble, with more success; a maid comes out of* PATRICIA'S *room on to the balcony.*]

CASTLEMAINE

The Countess of Castlemaine will speak with your mistress. [*The* MAID *goes in.*]

BRISTOL

[*Arresting* MONTAGU.] Oh, foh! [*Confidentially.*] If you wish the King's favour, young man, you must court the rising star.

MONTAGU

I seek no favour, and I heed no star.

MAID

[*Reappearing; saucily.*] My mistress says she'll come when she's ready. [*Exit.*]

ALL

Oh!

[CASTLEMAINE *is furious.*]

BRISTOL

[*To* MONTAGU.] That's new, then; for t'other day you was absorbed in its rays.

MONTAGU

Mr. Pepys, can you throw light on this Bedlam?

PEPYS

Take no heed. They are jesting.

MONTAGU

I like not the manner of it.

[*He moves to go but is arrested by* BUCKINGHAM'S *words.* BUCKINGHAM *emerges from the Castlemaine group and speaks.*]

MYDDLETON

[*To the group.*] Hush! Hush!

BUCKINGHAM

I'faith! We must serenade the lady. [*He improvises.*]

Patricia from the Emerald Isle,
And clad in boyish trim, sir.

MONTAGU

What's that?

BUCKINGHAM

Came riding gaily many a mile,
Looking demure and prim, sir.

PEPYS

[*Hurriedly, to* MONTAGU.] Come away!
[MONTAGU *shakes him off.*]

BUCKINGHAM

She saw the King, and full of guile,
Set to to fish for him, sir;
Her hook she baited with a smile,
And with a shapely limb, sir.

CRIES

Oh, very good! Go on!
[MONTAGU *has come near the group.*]

BUCKINGHAM

What more she showed I'll not compile;
'Tis time to dout the glim, sir —

[*Laughter.*]

BUCKINGHAM

Faith! I want another rhyme in "ile"—

MONTAGU

I have one for you, sir.

BUCKINGHAM

Oho! The merry Montagu. Let's hear.

MONTAGU

Buckingham's little soul is vile;
Buckingham's wit is dim, sir.

BUCKINGHAM

Poor! Poor! I'll not take it.

MONTAGU

[*Draws.*] Will you take it at the point of my sword?

CASTLEMAINE

Run him through, George!

[*The two men are face to face in the centre of the stage. The others surround them.* PATRICIA, *in her boy's*

dress, as in ACT I, *comes out of her room and sees what is going on.*]

PEPYS

[*In great excitement.*] I'll to the King!
[*Exit.*]

BUCKINGHAM

Gentlemen do not fight in the presence of ladies.

MONTAGU

I'm not to fight a gentleman, but to punish a ruffian and coward!

BUCKINGHAM

By God —!

[*He draws. The women scream. The men make more room for the fighters.* BUCKINGHAM *salutes and attacks* MONTAGU; *but* PATRICIA *comes quickly through the group, and with her rapier knocks up the two swords.*]

PATRICIA

My quarrel, I think.

MONTAGU

[*Amazed.*] Patricia!

PATRICIA

[*Coldly.*] The same, sir. [*She gets in front of him, facing* BUCKINGHAM.] On guard!

BUCKINGHAM

I do not fight with a woman. [*He puts up his sword.*]

PATRICIA

True: you stab her in the back.

MONTAGU

[*Trying to thrust her aside.*] Get you within. I will attend to this.

PATRICIA

[*Coldly.*] Have I asked you to help me?

CASTLEMAINE

[*To* BUCKINGHAM.] Have nought to do with the shameless hussy!

PATRICIA

Oho, my Lady Castlemaine? Now, I thought the King had bidden you leave *prestissimo!*

CASTLEMAINE

I shall be here long after you are tossed aside, a broken toy!

PATRICIA

Better tossed aside broken, than handed on — flawed.

CASTLEMAINE

[*Furious.*] You — you minx!

PATRICIA

[*Laughing.*] Lord! Is that the foulest you can call me? I could find a hundred worse names for you, and nearer the mark.

CASTLEMAINE

[*Advancing on her.*] By heaven I'll teach you your station!

PATRICIA

[*Facing her; quite calmly.*] My station, is it? O whirra, and *you'll* tache me? Which are you prouder of, the title the King gave your husband, or the title the people give him? You won 'em both for him, and you're welcome to what pride you can get out of 'em! Oh, save the mark! Are you proud of your station?

CASTLEMAINE

Arlington, lead me away from this — fishfag!

PATRICIA

Ay, lead her away, my Lord; a fishfag's too honest company.

[ARLINGTON *leads* CASTLEMAINE *off.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*To* MONTAGU.] All this *you* shall answer for.

PATRICIA

[*Turning sharply on him.*] Oh, no! Oh, no! I can answer for myself, and I do need no champion. [*At* MONTAGU.] Least of all a young gentleman who cannot see the nose before his face; who takes virtue for vice, and rushes at conclusions like a bull at a red rag.

BUCKINGHAM

[*Sternly.*] You are making enemies.

PATRICIA

You? I thank Saint Patrick! For to have you as my friend were to advertise myself as all you say I am. O, you — Hero! Brave in battle, but with the dirty lampooning, backbiter's cowardly heart! [*She turns away.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*Drawing on* MONTAGU.] Come, sir! Come!

PATRICIA

I forbid it! [*With a turn of her rapier she sends* BUCKINGHAM'S *flying.*] Pick up your sword, my Lord. [*A murmur of admiration.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*With grave courtesy.*] By heaven, Madam, that was brilliant. I salute you. [*He takes off his hat with a flourish.*]

PATRICIA

[*Condescendingly.*] Keep your head covered, Sir. You are very welcome. [*Sheathes her sword, and sits under the tree.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*To* MONTAGU.] And you, my young sprig, shall lose nothing by waiting.

MONTAGU

At your leisure.

[CHIFFINCH *comes in in a great hurry.*]

CHIFFINCH

Oh, fie! Oh, fie! Ladies — gentlemen — the King awaits you!

[*All the courtiers go out, talking excitedly.*]

BUCKINGHAM

[*With a grim laugh.*] The King! By my faith, I'm in fine trim for a frolic!

LADY ARLINGTON

[*Calling after him.*] George!

BUCKINGHAM

Oh, Lord, I forgot! Come then! [*He gives her his hand.*]

[*All but* PATRICIA *and* MONTAGU *exeunt.*]

MONTAGU

[*To her; sternly.*] Now! 'Tis you and I.

PATRICIA

[*Looking him up and down.*] What have you to say to me, sir?

MONTAGU

You have told these people the truth, emboldened thereto by the rise in your fortunes —

PATRICIA

What rises that at all?

MONTAGU

Nay, you shall not put me off with questions. 'Tis now my turn to show *you* the truth.

PATRICIA

There's moon enough to see it by.

MONTAGU

[*Furious.*] Nor you shall not tease me into a temper, neither.

PATRICIA

I never exert myself needlessly.

MONTAGU

[*Pulling himself together.*] You gave the Castlemaine no more than she deserved —

PATRICIA

[*Demurely.*] Thank you.

MONTAGU

[*Tragically.*] But do you deserve less?

PATRICIA

[*With a dangerous glitter.*] Oho?

MONTAGU

You win my love —

PATRICIA

[*Ironically.*] So it seems.

MONTAGU

[*Not to be put off.*] I say, you win my love: the love of a simple youth; faithful and true —

PATRICIA

So did the Castlemaine.

MONTAGU

[*Violently.*] You shall not put me out!

PATRICIA

[*Quietly.*] I have.

MONTAGU

[*Beginning to flounder.*] And having, as I say, won my love, you — you toss it aside — like — like —

PATRICIA

[*Helpful.*] Never mind the simile. I toss it aside.

MONTAGU

And pursue your fortune with the King —

PATRICIA

[*With the dangerous gleam again.*] Aha!

MONTAGU

[*Virtuously.*] And when by actions I will not describe, you had driven me from court, and sent me headlong upon a perilous adventure —

PATRICIA

From which you return unscathed.

MONTAGU

Then you pursued your fortune untrammelled, so that when I come back, 'tis to find —

PATRICIA

[*Gleaming.*] Yes?

MONTAGU

'Tis to find you in the Castlemaine's shoes.

PATRICIA

[*Drawing her rapier. Rises.*] On guard!

MONTAGU

What?

PATRICIA

On guard!

MONTAGU

But —

PATRICIA

On guard! or by the universe, I'll run you through.

MONTAGU

[*Horrified.*] I —? Fight *you?*

PATRICIA

You challenged me in the inn-yard, when I came betwixt you and your Castlemaine. 'Tis an old score, Master Sidney, and now you've added to it. On guard!

[*A pause,* MONTAGU *gazing into her face the while and paying no attention to his fencing.*]

PATRICIA

[*Hitting his sword.*] Stiffen your wrist, man! This is not child's play. On guard!

MONTAGU

I can't. Your eyes are too beautiful. Kill me and ha' done with it.

PATRICIA

Then unsay what you said just now.

MONTAGU

What?

PATRICIA

That you love me.

MONTAGU

I'll be damned if I do!

PATRICIA

[*Attacking.*] On guard then!

MONTAGU

[*Throwing his sword away.*] Run me through. I'd sooner die! [*He stands before her with his arms stretched apart.*

PATRICIA

On *your* head be it!

[*She rushes at him, as if to kill him, but flings herself into his arms, sending her sword flying.*]

MONTAGU

[*Dumbfounded.*] What — what does this mean?

PATRICIA

Oh, Sidney, what does it look as if it meant?

[*In the distance the* KING'S *procession is seen dancing in,* CHARLES *leading the way. They come in single file, the whole court, a man and a woman alternately, each carrying a small paper lantern. All are in dominoes and masks. They follow the* KING *as he threads his way in and out among the trees. At a signal from the* KING *they conceal their lamps under their dominoes and so become invisible. Thus they ultimately form a wide semicircle round the lovers before these are aware of their presence.*]

PATRICIA

[*Closing* MONTAGU'S *mouth with her hand.*] Hould your whisht now! You don't believe a word you've heard. You do know you can love me, and I can love you. [*She points to her dress.*] Why, look — [*Suddenly conscious of her legs and trying ineffectually to hide them with her hands.*] *No!!* — Sidney, where is your cloak?

MONTAGU

[*Picking it up.*] Here.

PATRICIA

[*Puts it round her legs like a skirt.*] Thank you. Now — what was I saying?

MONTAGU

You said "Look"—

PATRICIA

I didn't mean that. I meant I was clad like this, because I am riding home with Father O'Rafferty, and 'tis safer to ride as a boy. I'm riding home poorer than I came, and humbler, and wiser, and —

MONTAGU

[*Folding her in his arms.*] Your home's here, and you'll ride no further.

[*The semi-circle is formed. The lamps are suddenly flashed on the lovers.*]

PATRICIA

[*With a cry.*] Oh!

MONTAGU

[*In a rage, to the* KING, *who, like the others, is masked.*] Ha! What graceless rogue —?

CHARLES

My felicitations, young gentleman.

MONTAGU

[*Horrified.*] The King! — Pat! we're done for! [*They flop on their knees.*]

PATRICIA

We are!

CHARLES

Mr. Secretary Pepys reports you have served us well.

PEPYS

[*Advancing.*] Indeed, your Majesty, 'tis most true.

CHARLES

[*At a sign from him,* PEPYS *picks up one of the discarded swords and hands it to him. The* KING *takes off his glove.*] I see you have disarmed before the fair. [*He taps* MONTAGU *on the shoulder with the sword.*] Rise, Sir Sidney Montagu —

MONTAGU

Sire —

CHARLES

That's but the beginning. [*To* PATRICIA.] This

lady, now; the Queen loves her. I think her husband should be at least a Baron —

PATRICIA

Oh, Sire!

CHARLES

[*Continuing.*] When she has won a husband.

PATRICIA

I've won him now, at the sword's point. [*She kisses the* KING's *hand.*]

CHARLES

You see I can reward even virtue; though, to be sure, I'm out of practice. [*To the others.*] Come! The Queen awaits us!

[*The procession dances off as it came.* PATRICIA *and* MONTAGU *who had not risen from their knees, now fall sitting on their heels.*]

MONTAGU

Is it a dream?

PATRICIA

Oh, I hope not!

[*Enters* FATHER O'RAFFERTY *playing softly on his fiddle* MOYRA's *song; he slowly walks away, out of sight.*]

MONTAGU

Why! [*Quietly.*] Who's this?

PATRICIA

Sh! This is a Bishop.

MONTAGU

No, but truly?

PATRICIA

This is the Priest, all shaven and shorn —

MONTAGU

[*Eagerly.*]
Who married the man all tattered and torn?

PATRICIA

[*Demurely.*]
Who kissed the maiden all forlorn — [*As he still hesitates.*] Well! Why don't you?
[*They turn their faces to each other where they sit, and kiss like two children.* O'RAFFERTY'S *fiddle is heard in the distance.*]
[*And the moon shines.*]

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